NCAD Portfolio Guidelines 2023

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NCAD DUBLIN

What is a Portfolio?

It all starts with an idea...

A portfolio is a collection of art and/or design work you have created yourself. It is an opportunity for you to showcase your ideas, your skills and your creativity. We want to see how your imagination can generate a rich and visually interesting body of work. Building a portfolio will demonstrate your commitment to working through a process – from initial ideas and observations right through to thoughtfully researched and developed work. We want to see more than your finished work...

Show your process through notebooks, worksheets, sketch pads etc.

What to Include?

Work to your strengths. If you can draw or paint or sew or sculpt, mould, carve, photograph, film, create, imagine, explore, or turn the ordinary into something special, show us! Be creative and excite us with your work! Include recent or current work. Your portfolio reflects how you think and how you work now.
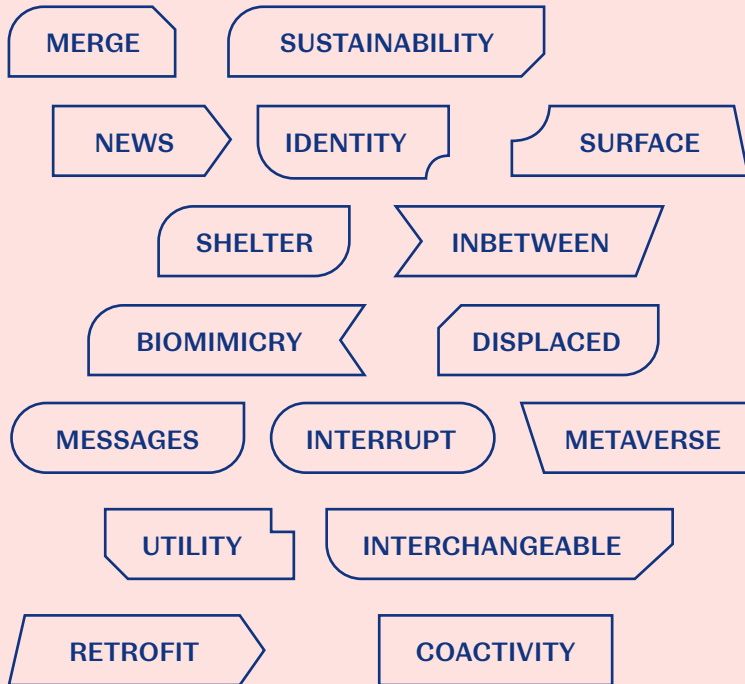
Work completed within the last two years is relevant – whether undertaken independently or as part of projects for school-leaving or further education assessments. Your Notebooks give us an insight into how you think. It is where you visually record ideas that you would like to develop. Notebooks are not perfect. Use them to show us the problems and inventive solutions you encounter along the creative journey.

How do I use this guide?

The guide is designed as a resource to help structure your portfolio for presentation. Use it as a reference to help frame your work in a way that shows your creative thinking. Looking for inspiration to get started? These suggested Guide Words could help trigger your imagination:

MERGE

SUSTAINABILITY

NEWS

IDENTITY

SURFACE

SHELTER

INBETWEEN

BIOMIMICRY

DISPLACED

MESSAGES

INTERRUPT

METAVERSE

UTILITY

INTERCHANGEABLE

RETROFIT

COACTIVITY

Guide Words can spark ideas, inform research and help to build a theme or narrative around your portfolio. Keep in mind that your portfolio will be assessed by each department you apply to. Focus your work so that it is relevant to your preferred department(s). Unsure as to which area of Fine Art or Design best fits you? See reverse for information on NCAD Studio Departments.

Things to consider

Use primary sources. Show us you can make direct observations using a variety of media and drawing processes. Experiment with line, tone, colour, form and surface. Mix things up! Your research should be visually rich, well-considered and show thorough exploration of ideas using a variety of material and processes.

Who or what inspires you? Use your notebooks to show an awareness of developments within the creative industries as well as an interest in individual artists, art movements and/or designers.

Be Brave. The portfolio journey can be a lonely one. Seek out a support network and look to family, friends and teachers for suggestions and opinions as you work. Think of the narrative of your portfolio and how it is composed. Organise your work sequentially to show the links between your observations, research and creative outcomes. Let your work speak for itself. Present your work so that your work is visibly accessible – Between 10 and 20 A1/A2 or A3 sheets as well as at least 1 notebook.
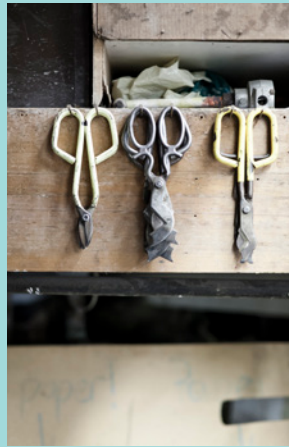
**Textile & Surface Design
and Jewellery & Objects — AD103**

Surface Detail / Texture / Colour / Finish /
Assembly

Designers of Textiles, Jewellery and Objects are
interested in the finer details - textures, colours
and surface quality fascinate and intrigue you.

Your portfolio for Textiles, Jewellery and Objects
should show your interest in detail and finish
on items. You should explore how objects are
put together.

Courses

**First Year Common Entry — AD101
Education & Fine Art or Design — AD202**

Drawing, Painting, Mark-Making / Observation /
Experimentation / Ideas Worksheets / Creative
Notebooks / Primary Sources

Common Entry brings together a mix of creative
minds. You will learn as much from your peers as from
your tutors and lectures. You will broaden your frame
of reference, discover new potential and be guided as
to which area of art or design fits your specific skill set.

Your First Year Common Entry portfolio should be
inquisitive and deeply explorative. Using primary
sources for inspiration, show us your fascination with
the world around you. We want to see you combine
your curiosity with observational, research and
problem-solving skills to re-interpret your surroundings
and develop new forms of visual expression.

**Graphic Design and Moving
Image Design — AD102**

Communication / Problem Solving / Design Briefs
/ Drawing & Observation / Typography / Creative
Notebooks

Graphic Designers are excellent communicators.
Your drawing skills are rich and vibrant, and you
like to work from design briefs.

Your Graphic Design Portfolio should reflect
your interest in communicating through design.
Show us your strong drawing and problem-solving
skills. Demonstrate how you can combine text
and image to create an interesting aesthetic
that communicates a clear message.

Product Design — AD212

Problem Solving / Idea Generation / Concept Development / Presentation / Creative Notebooks / Drawing & Model Making

Product Designers are problem solvers for everyday life. You identify design flaws quickly and want to find a solution. You want to help people on a practical level and make the world a better place, one design at a time.

Your Product Design portfolio should look at existing products and think how you could improve on their design. Challenge yourself to create a solution for an every-day problem.

Illustration — AD217

Imagination / Problem Solving / Visual Language / Creative Thinking / Composition & Narrative / Engaging Aesthetic

Illustrators have rich and versatile imaginations. You solve complex design problems with seemingly effortless skill.

Your portfolio should be rich in various styles of illustration. How for example, might you illustrate one of the guide-words? If you had a billboard to illustrate an idea, how would it differ from illustrating an idea, how would it differ from illustrating the same idea on a postage stamp? You should focus on solving design problems.
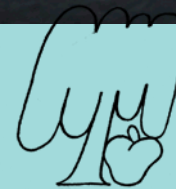
Fine Art — AD204

Individual Expression / Visual Awareness / Observation Skills / Subject Engagement / Imagination & Interpretation

Fine Artists are thinkers and observers. You see and interpret the world differently and have a highly individual visual expression. You may find that you work with both traditional and new materials and media.

Your Fine Art portfolio should show an emphasis on visual awareness. You should look at how you express yourself, explore a variety of media and engage with your subject matter. Original digital artwork is welcomed and encouraged within your Fine Art portfolio.

Applied Art
— AD 105

Ceramics / Glass (Hard Materials)

Experimentation and problem-solving / process driven / glass, ceramics, hard materials / building form / crafted objects / thinking through making

Your portfolio should show: interests in working with hard materials, observational drawing, interests in form / volume and sculpture, interests in the 'making' processes, command of skills and keenness for craftsmanship, interests in traditional techniques alongside new technologies and approaches, an ability to convey ideas and thinking through making.

Applied Art
— AD 105

Textile Art & Artefact

Experimentation and exploring soft materials / 'materiality' of the maker and materials / repurposing and reusing / sustainable practices / crafted objects / body related, body adorning / contemporizing traditional techniques.

Your portfolio should show: strong drawing through a wide range of media and interpretations, interests in colour, texture and detail, interests of traditional alongside new technologies and approaches, interests in historical, social, and cultural narratives, interests in the 'making' processes, command of skills and keenness for craftsmanship, an ability to convey ideas and thinking through making.

Interaction Design — AD222

Digital Experience / Technology / Engagement / Cutting-Edge Design

Interaction Designers create intuitive and engaging digital experiences. Exploring the relationship between people and technology, your research will help predict user needs.

Your ideas will inform future design-concepts and technological developments that make for easy digital interactions.

Your Interaction Design portfolio should show elements of problem solving, idea generation and a curiosity for how to engage with screen-based designs.

Courses

How is my portfolio assessed?

Creative Enquiry and Visual Research – Begin with gatherings. Show us how you observe the world around you. Visually describe, explain, record and invent through real-life observation.

Idea Development and Material/Technical Exploration – Develop your ideas beyond the known or purely observed. Be playful, imaginative, experimental and inventive. We want to see how your research can produce new creative outcomes.

Critical Judgement, Selection and Resolution – Identify which ideas have the most potential. Take at least one of your creative proposals and develop it thoroughly to a level of completion. Show how your creative outcomes and solutions have evolved as part of the research process.
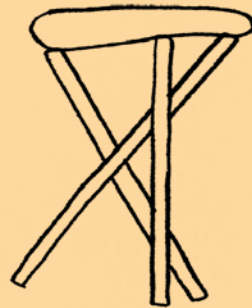
Find out more

If you would like more information on how to **begin working on your portfolio**, how to prepare your portfolio for various study pathway options at NCAD, **sample portfolios from current NCAD students**, guidelines on how to **submit** your portfolio, **FAQs** – as well as information on free **open days and events**, or to join our Undergraduate Mail List to be first to receive updates and notifications on undergrad study at NCAD bit.ly/ugmailncad – go to our Portfolio site at bit.ly/ncad-portfolio For NCAD sample portfolios see: bit.ly/ncad-portfolio

This guide is kept deliberately short and open for interpretation. We want you to create:

Your Portfolio – Your Way.

If you need more guidance and support, please check out our website:

bit.ly/ncad-portfolio

where you will find further guidelines on how you might approach a portfolio for a particular department.

Further Information

Portfolio submissions to NCAD are digital for 2023

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 (see our Portfolio Guide). However, you will need to document your work digitally through scanning/photography/film.

When can I start to submit my digital Portfolio?

You can not submit your Portfolio digitally until you have registered with the CAO and received your CAO number. You can then start to submit your portfolio digitally via the platform.

The Portfolio Submission platform will be open from November 2022 right up until the closing date, allowing you to submit your work at your own pace.

You can save your progress and return to review and edit as many times as you like, up until the deadline of 4.30pm Friday 11th February 2023. Please check the NCAD website for updates https://bit.ly/ncadopen

Match your CAO application

Do not submit a portfolio for an NCAD course unless it is listed on your CAO application. Your portfolio may not be reviewed or you may not receive a score for a course that is not listed on your CAO application.

Like applying to the CAO, it is your responsibility to make sure your Portfolio Submission has been made correctly and on time.

What will I need?

You can use a smartphone camera to document (photograph/video) your work. Please use the best quality smartphone camera that is available to you. Make sure you have nice lighting; natural light works best and don't forget to give the lens a wipe!

How to document your work

A standard portfolio contains between 10 and 20 A1 /A2 or A3 worksheets as well as at least 1 notebook. Each worksheet can contain more than one artwork / drawing / sketch.

You will need to document all your worksheets separately, as image files or as PDFs.

You can document your notebook as a set of images in a PDF. Alternatively, you can video your notebook by recording your work as you turn the pages. If you make a video, you do not need to narrate it or talk us through each page. Remember, whatever format you choose to document your work, the most important factor is that your work is clear and easily legible.

Further Information

Formats and File Size

You can upload files in the following formats:
- jpeg / jpg / png / tif / tiff
- avi / m4v / mov / mp4
- PDF

The maximum file size is 20MB for each file you submit whether that's an image, video or PDF. If a video file exceeds this limit, please supply a link to YouTube / Vimeo or similar.

Important: We will not be able to assess work that is password protected.

You cannot supply links to any other website or file sharing app. We will not review any material uploaded to Google Drive, Dropbox, Googlesites, a website you have created yourself, WeTransfer links or anything considered similar. All your work must be uploaded to the NCAD Portfolio Submission Platform.

Other considerations

Remove your work from any plastic or other folders that will obscure detail. Place your work flat on a large surface and include the entire sheet in the frame. Aim to document your work in good daylight or under a strong artificial light. Make sure there are no shadows over your work.

A Portfolio Submission for every NCAD course

You will need to make a portfolio submission for each course you apply to. Each NCAD Studio programme listed on your CAO application will require a portfolio submission on the platform.

For example, if you are applying to AD101 Common Entry and AD102 Graphic Design, you will need to go through the process twice. One portfolio for each course. This allows you the option to tailor your portfolio to suit each course.

If you plan to submit the exact same portfolio for each course then the platform will allow you to make a copy of your submission. We have information about this on our website.

Make sure that the status of your submission is set to "Submitted" before the deadline. If you leave your submission at "In Progress" it will not be reviewed.

Scheduling my Portfolio Submission

You should factor in plenty of time to document your work. You should also factor in time to register with and upload your work to the portfolio submission platform.

Deadline for submission
Friday 10th February 2023. Please check the NCAD website for updates at this link Further Information https://bit.ly/ncadopen

Dates for your diary

Portfolio Information Sessions
Monday 24th & Tuesday 25th October 2022,
6pm — 7.30pm

NCAD Open Day
Wednesday 23rd November 2022

CAO Closing Date 2023:
Wednesday 1st February — 5:15pm

Portfolio Submission Deadline 2023:
Friday 10th February 2023

Portfolio Submission for 2023
Portfolio submissions for 2023 will be 100% digital. We will be offering detailed information on digital portfolio submissions at all of our undergraduate open events.

Contact us

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ncad.ie/study-at-ncad/contact-us

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