A handcrafted paper piano keyboard made of layered cardboard and paper, with black and white keys. Two hands are shown playing the keyboard. The background is a light, neutral color. A green geometric line is drawn across the image, starting from the top left and extending towards the bottom right.

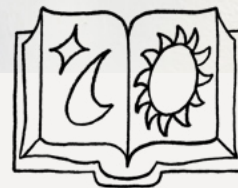
NCAD Portfolio Guidelines 2025

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?

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.

What is a Portfolio?



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:



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 and then upload 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 visually accessible. You should upload between 10 and 20 files as well as at least 1 notebook.





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 skillset.

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.



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.



Graphic Design and Moving Image Design — AD102

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

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

Your Graphic and Moving Image 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 everyday 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 to illustrate an idea how would that differ between say a billboard to a postage stamp? You should focus on solving design problems.



Fine Art — AD104

Fine Art Pathways: Media / Painting / Print / Sculpture

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 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, photography and audio-visual work is welcomed and encouraged within your Fine Art portfolio.

(continued on next page)

Applied Art — AD104

Applied Art Pathways:

Textile Art & Artefact / Ceramics & Glass

Please include a short personal statement about your interest in Textile Art and Artefact and/or Ceramics and Glass with your portfolio. Max 100 words.

If interested in Ceramics and Glass-

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; and thinking through making.

If interested in Textile Art & Artefact

Your portfolio should show: strong drawing through a wide range of media and interpretations; interests in colour, texture and detail; interests in traditional as 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; and thinking through making.

Interaction Design — AD222

Digital Experience / Technology /
Engagement / Cutting-Edge Design

Interaction Design (IxD) is a broad field that ranges from designing apps to creating interactive environments.

Your portfolio should explore how we experience things and how to solve problems. That could take any form. For example making clothes to interact with the world differently, or building a clock that makes people think about time in a new way. Your projects do not have to be digital but if you like to code, play with Arduino, or design websites or apps, include these too.



Fashion Design — AD211

Idea Generation / Drawing & Design Skills /
Colour, Texture & Line / Creative Notebooks /
Body & Environment / Design Samples

Fashion Designers have their finger on the pulse. You know what is in vogue and you are ready for the next trend before it happens. Your portfolio should be Fashion-focused.

Think about how a piece of clothing looks on a body. What lines does a moving figure create when wearing a particular garment? From where do you draw your inspiration?

How is my portfolio reviewed?

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 Mailing List to be first to receive updates and notifications on undergrad study at NCAD - go to our website.

Click [Study At NCAD](#) and then click [Undergraduate Portfolio](#)



Join the Undergraduate Mailing List:



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:

Click [Study At NCAD](#) and then click [Undergraduate Portfolio](#)

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

Portfolio submissions in 2025 to NCAD are digital

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 pp 3-9). However, you will need to document your work digitally through scanning/photography/film.



When can I start to submit my digital Portfolio?

You can't start your NCAD Portfolio Submission until you have applied to CAO for 2025. You will need your 2025 CAO number which is an 8-digit number beginning with '25'.

The Portfolio Submission Platform will be open from November 2024 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 17:00 on 7th February 2025 IST. Please check the NCAD website for updates.

Match your CAO application

Only submit a portfolio for an NCAD course that you have listed on your CAO application. Otherwise 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 submitted on time.

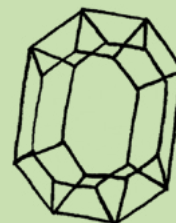
What will I need?

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.



Formats and File Size

You can upload files in the following formats:

- jpeg / jpg / png / gif
- avi / m4v / mov / mp4
- PDF

The maximum file size is 1GB for each file you submit whether that's an image, video or PDF. If your PDF file size exceeds this limit please split the PDF into smaller sized PDFs for upload. If a video file exceeds this limit, please supply a link to YouTube / Vimeo or similar.

Important: We will not be able to review 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. Please ensure any documents are coming directly from your computer.

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.

We expect a high volume of Portfolio Uploads on Friday the 7th of February. Due to this, technical difficulties may occur. NCAD cannot manually upload Portfolios received after the deadline.

Deadline for Submission

Friday 7th February 2025. Please check the [NCAD website](#) for updates.

**Dates for
your diary**

Portfolio Information Sessions

Virtual: 21st October 2024

On Campus: 22nd + 23rd October 2024

Details to follow closer to the time through
the NCAD website and NCAD Newsletter

NCAD Open Day 2024

Wednesday 27th November 2024

CAO Closing Date 2025

Saturday 1st February 2025 - 17:00

Portfolio Submission Deadline 2025

Friday 7th February 2025 - 17:00

Contact us

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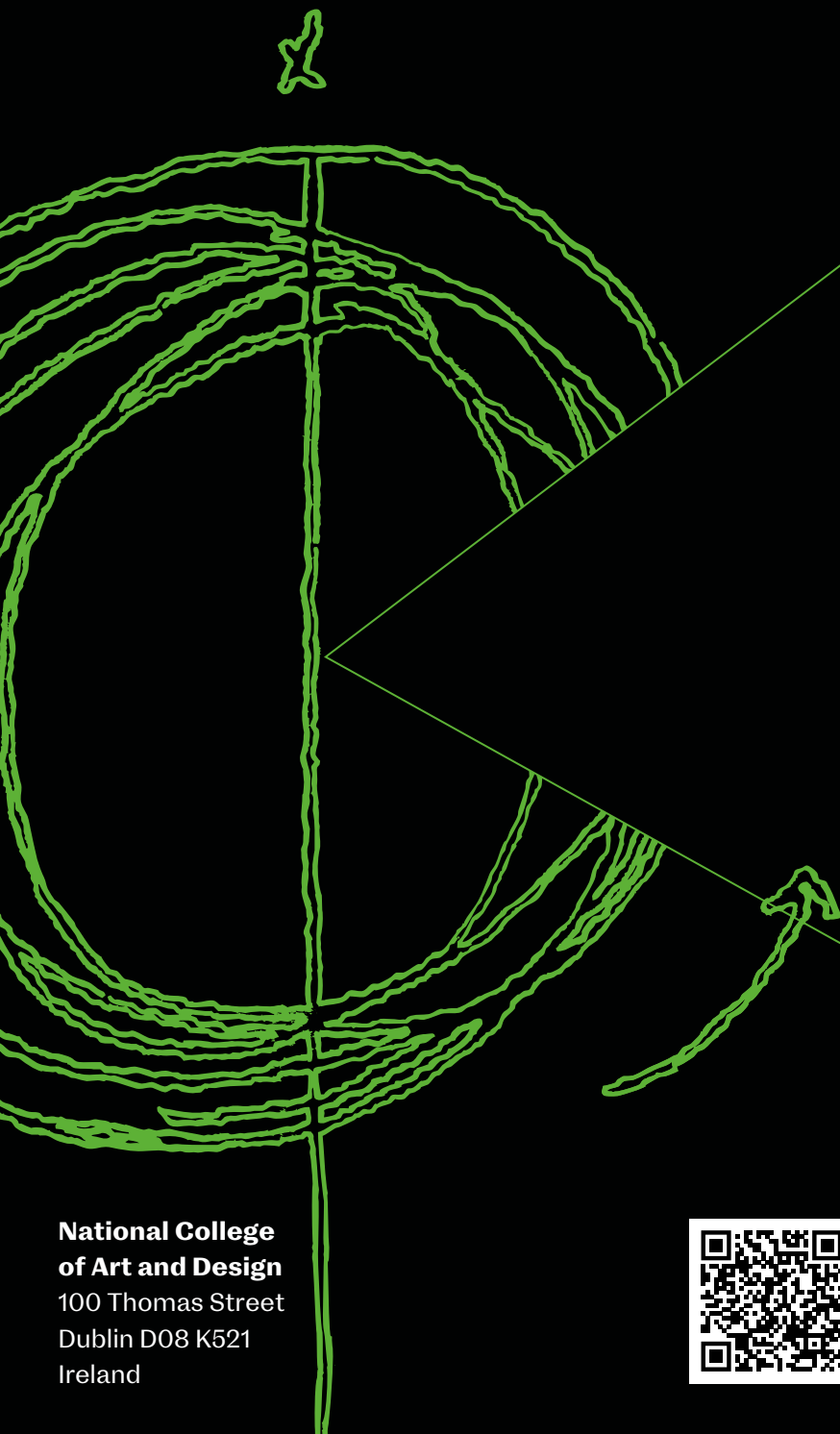
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