




THE  
NORTHERN  
SCHOOL  
OF ART

# Application & Portfolio Guide

Undergraduate & Postgraduate

   @TheNorthernArt

NORTHERNART.AC.UK

At The Northern School of Art, we provide every applicant\* the opportunity for a one-to-one portfolio review with a member of our specialist staff. Portfolio reviews can take place either in-person or virtually depending on your personal preference.

We hope you find this Guide useful.

## Contact

If you have any further questions, please don't hesitate to get in touch at [studentrecruitment@northernart.ac.uk](mailto:studentrecruitment@northernart.ac.uk) or on **01642 288888**.

Thank you,  
**Admissions Team**  
The Northern School of Art

Information is also available online at [northernart.ac.uk](http://northernart.ac.uk)

\* Applicants must meet basic entry criteria.

## Application process

It is important to us that you have all the information you need at every stage of the application process.

### 1. Enquiry Stage

Research our institution via the website, prospectus and open day.

### 2. Application Stage

Complete UCAS application form (preferably before January deadline).

### 3. Portfolio Review/Audition Stage

Attend review/audition and tour facilities either virtually or in-person.

### 4. Outcome/Offer Stage

Receive notification of our decision.

### 5. Reply to Offer Stage

If successful, you have the opportunity to FIRM or INSURE with us.

### 6. Pre-Enrolment Stage

We will keep in touch with you at key points throughout the year and invite you to join our social media groups to start building relationships with staff and other prospective students.

### 7. Enrolment Stage

Find out about Freshers' events and Welcome Week.

## Entry Requirements

Your potential is our main focus when assessing your suitability for the programme you have applied to. We take into account all aspects of your application and not just your academic profile.

If you are a mature applicant (i.e. 21+ years), we will place more emphasis on your portfolio, your skills and experience you can demonstrate at your portfolio review.

Your portfolio is an integral part of the assessment. It should demonstrate your current skills, interests and knowledge where appropriate. Further details are given throughout this guide.

It is also expected that you will bring evidence of written work and/or have a Level 2 qualification (or equivalent) in literacy and numeracy.

**Find more information about UCAS tariff score, please visit [northernart.ac.uk](http://northernart.ac.uk)**

## Your Portfolio

Your portfolio should be a visual representation of your creative interests and identity. Therefore, no two portfolios will ever be the same.

Essentially, any portfolio should include some evidence of the following:

1. **Development of ideas and creative thinking i.e. drawing, note-taking, photography.**
2. **A range of appropriate skills and techniques you have previously developed.**
3. **Your approach to the creative process i.e. research, ideas, concept, final outcome.**
4. **Ability to experiment and take risks.**
5. **Evidence of written work.**

Additionally, including work completed outside of your usual studies is a good way to show independence and self-motivation. If your work is too heavy or too awkward to bring to interview, you can always bring photographs instead.

## Project Work

We like to see how you have responded to your project briefs from your initial research and how you have developed your ideas to the conclusion or final outcome. The subject does not matter and it can be either as part of your programme or an independent project as long as it demonstrates creativity, a deep involvement in your work and your conclusion or final idea.

## Written Work

Even though our degrees are mainly practice-based, you will have written tasks to complete over your chosen programme. You will need to make lecture notes and write essays and a dissertation/report in the final year. Written work for interview could be:

- An extract taken from an essay previously completed during your studies.
- A reflective piece of self-evaluation from one of your projects.
- A report, journal, blog or script.
- All should be word processed 500-1000 words.

## Digital Work

You may decide to use digital work as a way to enhance your physical portfolio or use as an alternative to a physical portfolio.

You may wish to bring in a tablet or have work saved on a USB stick.

Digital work can include:

- Photographs
- Digital Drawings
- Evidence of software skills
- Scans from your sketchbook
- Show Reels
- Links to your blog
- Research Notes

A digital portfolio can be submitted via email in advance of the portfolio review too.

**Acting Applicants?  
Further information is  
provided within this guide**

## Presentation

Portfolios can be presented in a variety of ways. However, you should consider the following:

### Organise work logically

If you organise your work into a logical order that demonstrates your thinking processes, it will allow for a better flow of discussion during your portfolio review.

### Does it represent you?

Let your portfolio reflect your own individual style, include personal projects and give it a sense of originality.

### Remember!

Be practical - it's likely that you will be attending other interviews and you may have to carry your portfolio for a long distance. Thinking about the weight of your portfolio, this may encourage you to think 'quality not quantity'. It's usually better to have a few really interesting things to talk about than lots of the same.

## Sketchbooks

Sketchbooks are a great way to demonstrate your creative process, and we strongly encourage you to bring them along with you.

## Your Portfolio Review

Your portfolio review with us is intended to be **relaxed** and **informal**. It is a time to focus our attention on you and your future! Previous applicants have commented on how valued they feel by the experience gained from this.

Portfolio reviews are an opportunity for you to demonstrate your enthusiasm, commitment and self-motivation for the programme.

It is also the chance for you to ask us anything you want to know to help make your decision easier.

If you require any support or special arrangements during your review please let us know beforehand so that we can have everything in place for you before you arrive. If you would like to discuss any support needs, please contact Student Services who will be happy to help (see page 11).

You will also have the chance to view our facilities, either virtually or in-person.

## Portfolio Review Questions

It is good practice to do a bit of background research on the programme by reading the prospectus or attending an open day so we can make sure you are on the right track. We also like to know what activities you do to feed your cultural appetite.

This may include:

- Who or what inspires your work?
- What TV shows, theatre productions/films are you excited about?
- What books, magazines, newspapers do you read?
- Have you volunteered for anything?
- What gigs/festivals do you attend?
- What galleries and museums have you been to?
- What artists and designers have you researched?
- When have you worked well in a team?

# Subject Specific Advice

Courses related to

**Costume Interpretation with Design |  
Textiles & Surface Design | Fashion**

Examples can include:

**1. Knowledge of the subject you are applying for**

**2. Drawing Skills**

- Observational drawing of natural and/or man-made subject matter
- Experimenting with different media
- Design sketches and illustrations
- Photography or printmaking

**3. Basic sewing skills**

- Embroidery
- Sewing Samples
- Garments

**4. Sketchbooks**

- Evidence your ideas generation, development and research
- References to artists and designers that have inspired/influenced your work
- You may have references to contemporary and historical practices

**5. Experimental approaches to your projects**

**6. Examples of written work**

Work doesn't necessarily have to relate specifically to the programme, as long as it is clear that this is where your interests lie. If you want to include evidence of 'technical/design based skills' this could be experimental samples, design sheets, or finished products.

Courses related to

**Production Design for Stage & Screen | Model Making  
& Visual FX | Film, TV & Theatre Production**

Examples can include:

**1. Knowledge of the subject you are applying for**

**2. 3D practical/digital models**

**3. Drawing skills**

- Observational drawing
- Technical drawing and perspective drawing is beneficial but not essential
- Experimenting with different media
- Design sketches and illustrations

**4. Sketchbooks**

- Evidence your ideas generation, development and research
- References to artists and designers that have inspired/influenced your work
- You may have references to contemporary and historical practices

**5. Experimental approaches to your projects**

**6. Examples of written work**

**7. Applicants to Film, TV & Theatre Production courses may consider:**

- Recorded media be it visual, sound, or edited material either in college, or under your own initiative e.g. a YouTube or Vimeo Short Films or a theatre production you may have been involved with.
- Draft scripts or script ideas in development
- Photography (good as an alternative if you are unable to show us your own moving image or theatre productions)
- Written work May include film/programme reviews, scripts.

**8. Questions we may ask**

- What TV shows, theatre productions and films are you excited about?
- What have you been to see or watched recently?
- Do you have any practical experience such as backstage work or working on festivals or events?

Courses related to

**Animation | Fine Art | Graphic Design |  
Digital Design & Advertising | Illustration  
for Commercial Application**

Examples can include:

**1. Knowledge of the subject you are applying for**

**2. Drawing and painting skills**

- Observational drawing
- Experimenting with different media
- Design sketches and illustrations
- Paintings using different media
- Photography
- Poster Art
- Comic Art

**3. Evidence of a variety of techniques and processes**

- Traditional and/or digital

**4. Multimedia and/or 3D work**

- Sculpture work/models (can be photographed)
- Animations or moving image

**5. Online presence (design and visual arts related)**

e.g. Instagram, Behance, Facebook,  
Flickr, Vimeo, Wordpress etc.

**6. Sketchbooks**

- Evidence your ideas generation, development and research
- References to artists and designers that have inspired/influenced your work
- You may have references to contemporary and historical practices

**7. Experimental approaches to your projects**

**8. Examples of written work**

Please ensure any work you bring is easily viewable, especially digital files. Feel free to bring work on your own tablet or laptop. We also want to know about you, so we'll ask you about what artists, films, games or stories inspire you and your work.

Courses in

**Photography**

Clearly laid out portfolio, which is easy to look through.  
Considered quality not quantity and avoiding repetition.  
Good to organise into sections.

Examples can include:

**1. Knowledge of the subject you are applying for**

**2. Evidence of visual imagery/photographs that you have created yourself**

**3. Notebooks/contact sheets that indicate developmental processes - experimental.**

**4. Simple presentation – mounted black or white board is preferable**

**5. Series of photographs that indicate interpretation/technical ability:**

- Use of light, composition, print quality, narrative, interaction with the subject, visual story, associated research and how this feed into the project – relevance, individuality, ideas, experimentation, evidence of an ability to take a creative risk and experiment.

**6. Sketchbooks**

- Evidence of your level of understanding photographic technique: this includes an ability to use a camera with exposure/composition/lenses, different focal lengths and work flow.

**7. Written work**

- Will include the influence and reference to other photographers/artists/filmmakers.

**8. Digital work**

- We advise a maximum of 20 images prepared and ready to view on a tablet/laptop. The work should be considered and organized, displaying the ability that you have decided to choose key images before placing them in the appropriate order to be viewed during the portfolio review. Be selective with your images that you can talk confidently about.

## BA (Hons) Acting for Stage & Screen

### Your Audition

For the audition you are required to prepare 2 contrasting monologues:

- 1 Classical
- 1 Contemporary

The Classical piece should be Elizabethan or Jacobean (for example, Shakespeare, Marlowe, Webster) and preferably in blank verse.

Your Contemporary piece should come from a published play produced post-1980 although the more recent the better.

With the monologues, try to choose pieces that suit your age and showcase your skills. You will perform the monologues to our panel and may be re-directed in one of them.

As part of the audition you will also take part in a movement session lasting approximately 30 minutes. Please wear comfortable clothing you can move in. This is an opportunity for you to get a taste for what a typical session will be like and for the Lecturer to assess your physical theatre skills.

If you have any injuries or disabilities that may mean you cannot take full part, please inform the Lecturer at the start of the session.

### Your interview

After the audition, a short interview will follow to allow you the opportunity to talk about your previous experience and to find out more about why you want to study Acting. If you have any questions or would like further details about our audition process please contact [interviews@northernart.ac.uk](mailto:interviews@northernart.ac.uk)

If you require any support or special arrangements during your interview/audition, please let us know beforehand so that we can have everything in place for you before you arrive.

If you would like to discuss any support needs contact Student Services who will be happy to help.

You will have the chance to view our facilities, either virtually or in-person.

### Interview questions

It is good practice to do a bit of background research on the programme by reading the prospectus or attending an open day so we can make sure you are on the right track. We also like to know what activities you do to feed your cultural appetite. This may include:

- Visits to the theatre, galleries and/or museums.
- What films/TV Programmes you watch Gigs/festivals attended.
- Reading books, newspapers or magazines.
- Music you have listened to.
- Conversations you have had about the subject applied.
- What acting practitioners interest you and why.
- Researching other actors/performers

### Useful Checklist

Here is a handy checklist to help you before you come to see us:

- Select monologues you can talk confidently about
- Consider the contextual background of the play your monologue is from
- Demonstrate your thought processes
- Have a practice run-through with family or friends
- Although not essential, you may want to bring work completed outside your studies e.g. involvement in shows, exhibitions, competitions, work experience etc.
- Remember to include evidence of your writing skills
- Contact us beforehand if you have any support needs

#### No Audition Fee

Auditions and interviews can take place either virtually or in-person.

## Postgraduate Level Advice

[northernart.ac.uk/masters-degrees](http://northernart.ac.uk/masters-degrees)

### How to apply

All applications for **postgraduate** programmes are made directly to the School.

Application forms are available online or by contacting: [interviews@northernart.ac.uk](mailto:interviews@northernart.ac.uk)

### When to apply

There is no set deadline for postgraduate applications but we encourage you to apply early enough to prepare for finance and accommodation in good time if required.

### Entry Requirements

Applicants must have one of the following:

- Degree at 2:1 or above (If still studying, you should be projected to achieve this grade)
- Degree at 2:2 and evidence of postgraduate study (PGCE teaching qualification, PG Certificate or PG Diploma); or evidence of exempting experience; or
- Experiential learning in lieu of a degree to be assessed by interviewing panel;

Applicants holding other qualifications may also be considered provided that they have appropriate relevant professional experience.

### References

At least one written reference is required to support your application, but it is usual to supply two where possible. One of your references must be relatively recent and preferably from a previous or current academic tutor. We also accept references from previous or current employers as well as other creative practitioners.

All masters programmes are delivered over a 12-month period.

### Your MA proposal & interview

Applicants who meet the entry requirements will be required to submit a proposal outlining their intentions for MA study. This will be explored further if invited to an interview.

The faculty staff will evaluate the proposal to determine its feasibility in the context of the resources required and the availability of specialist staff to support their chosen area of study.

Your proposal should be a maximum of 500 words and include:

#### MA Design Practice

Your proposal should include a portfolio of work and a supporting statement about your practice. Your statement should be a maximum of 500 words. This does not need to be detailed but should include:

- A title
- Your reasons for applying to study MA Design Practice at The Northern School of Art
- A description of your current practice
- The proposed direction of your MA study (including potential development ideas/themes)

#### MA Arts Practice

Your proposal should include a portfolio of work and a supporting statement about your practice. Your statement should be a maximum of 500 words. This does not need to be detailed but should include:

- A title
- Your reasons for applying to study MA Design Practice at The Northern School of Art
- A description of your current practice
- The proposed direction of your MA study (including potential development ideas/themes)

#### Information, Advice & Guidance

If you would like any support with your proposal or interview/audition, please contact us for appointment with the team.

#### MA Art, Culture & Curation

Your proposal should be a maximum of 500 words (with supporting imagery if applicable). This does not need to be detailed but should include:

- A title
- Your reasons for applying to study MA Design History at The Northern School of Art
- A description of your current practice
- The proposed direction of your MA study (including potential research ideas/themes)

#### MA Directing & Theatre Making

Your proposal should be a maximum of 500 words and include:

- Your reasons for applying to study MA Directing & Performance Practice at The Northern School of Art
- A proposed project
- Discuss what your chosen project would entail (style, influences and working methods)
- Discuss current developments within the sector and how your practice fits in
- You will also be required to perform a contemporary monologue at the audition (lasting 2-3mins).



## Finally...

Be honest.  
Be yourself.  
Relax.

## Next Steps

If you're excited about studying with us, please research further using the website, open days and social media or get in touch to speak to one of our admissions team.

For undergraduate degrees, complete your UCAS application (preferably before January deadline).

For postgraduate degrees, please see page 11 inside this booklet.

Thank you.

## Contact us

If you have any further questions, please don't hesitate to get in touch:  
**[studentrecruitment@northernart.ac.uk](mailto:studentrecruitment@northernart.ac.uk)**

Information is also available online at:  
**[northernart.ac.uk/apply](http://northernart.ac.uk/apply)**

## Useful contacts

### Admissions Team

01642 288 888  
[interviews@northernart.ac.uk](mailto:interviews@northernart.ac.uk)

### Student Services

01429 858410 (term time only)  
or 01642 856125  
[HEStudent.Services@northernart.ac.uk](mailto:HEStudent.Services@northernart.ac.uk)  
or [Disability@northernart.ac.uk](mailto:Disability@northernart.ac.uk)

### Opening Times

8.30am - 5.00pm - Monday to Thursday  
8.30am - 4.30pm - Friday

### The Northern School of Art

No 1 Church Street  
Hartlepool  
TS24 7DR

For information about open days,  
please visit **[northernart.ac.uk](http://northernart.ac.uk)**