ACES efolio 2019 /20

The ACES Tayside guide to creating a digital portfolio 2019-20

About ACES Tayside

ACES is a nationally funded initiative based across the four art schools in Scotland. Our job is to encourage, educate and empower senior-phase pupils to consider careers and higher education in art, design and architecture.

Our broad programme of events and 1-1 support helps pupils to explore their options, create a competitive application and develop a strong portfolio of work.

ACES advice is always impartial, and we support pupils wherever they want to go.

For more information about our events, support and to see if you are eligible to be a part of aces, please visit our website.

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The ACES Tayside guide to creating a digital portfolio

Lots of courses now look for a digital portfolio. This may be all that they will ask to see, or it may be used as an initial selection and then they may invite you for an interview with your full portfolio.

This guide will explain:

- What a digital-portfolio is, and why you might be asked for one 2
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What is the digital portfolio?

A digital portfolio is just that – a digital version of your full portfolio. To create one you will need to photograph or scan in your work and sketchbooks, and present them as digital slides.

Why am I being asked for one?

For universities/courses that have very high application numbers a digital portfolio makes it easier and more fair to decide who they are going to invite to an interview.

As universities receive applications from all over the world, some think that is more fair for everyone to submit their work in the same format.

What format do they want?

Frustratingly, different universities and courses have different requirements. It's essential to do your research and prepare early.

The formats and deadlines are listed on the next page.

Please be aware that you may have to make two (or even three) slightly different portfolios – depending on where you are applying. Once you've got one done it's easy to do though!

How can ACES help me?

ACES hosts **digital portfolio masterclasses and support sessions** in November, December and January. Here we will show you everything you need to know.

At the digifolio sessions you will have access to the DJCAD photography and digital editing suites – so you can photograph and scan your work in professionally.

Current DJCAD students will be there to help you – it's a team effort!

1-1 Support

Helen can also work with you 1-1 – in school or on-campus. Just send an email to aces@dundee.ac.uk for more help!

University e-portfolio requirements 2020

The following advice is correct as of August 2019.

Please see individual university websites for full details and deadlines.

University of Dundee

- Architecture:
    - You may be asked to submit a digital portfolio or complete a create task in support of your application.
    - No interview.

- Art & Design General Foundation
  and
- Product/Interior/Digital Interaction Design
  and
- Direct-entry to 2nd year specialisms
  (Animation, Illustration, Graphic Design, Jewellery & Metal Design, Textile Design, Art & Philosophy and Fine Art)

    - 2-stage selection: digital portfolio (15 slides, PDF, 10MB limit) to be submitted in January, then you may be invited to interview in March.

University of Edinburgh

All courses – deadline 28 January, 12 noon.

- Courses in Art and Design
    - 25 JPEGs/Slides:
        - 10 development/sketchbook work
        - 10 concluded work
        - 5 creative influences.
    - Each JPEG can be no longer than 800px on the longest side.
    - 1MB limit for each JPEG.
    - No interview.

- Film and Television
    - One digital video, up to 5 minutes, accompanied by a short passage of text.
    - In addition, you will be asked to give written answers to three questions.
    - No interview.

University e-portfolio requirements 2020

Edinburgh Napier University

- Film, Interior & Spatial Design, Photography and Product Design
    - 25-40 images
    - PDF.
    - As part of the application process, you will usually be invited to submit a portfolio and/or attend an interview.

Glasgow School of Art

- Architecture and Design subjects:
    - 15 JPEGs/Slides

- Fine Art subjects:
    - 25 JPEGs/Slides

- Each JPEG can be no larger than 200kb and 72dpi resolution.
- Standard screen dimensions (not widescreen)

- Deadline: 22 January, 5pm

- 2-stage selection: digital portfolio then you may be invited to interview with full portfolio.
- Interviews usually in March.

- GSA also requires a 500 word statement. This is separate to the UCAS personal statement, and must focus on your creative work only.

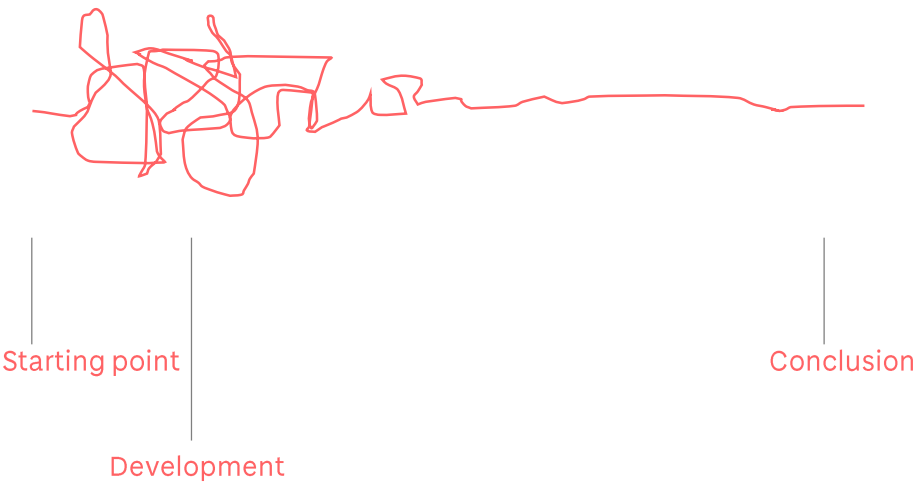
What to include

...everything you normally would

- **Research:** ideas, theory, relevant artists, designers or architects.
- **Observational study:** drawings, photographs, collections.
- **Experimentation:** playing, developing your media, your subject, your skills.
- **Development:** keep track of what you are doing and show evidence of this – photograph your work at all stages and include these in your sketchbooks.
- **Sketchbooks** are vital, and some courses specifically ask to see them.
- **Drawing** in general is important – always try to draw from life rather than photographs wherever possible. Be confident!

Development is the most important thing – universities need to see that you can work an idea through from start to finish, and they want to see they journey you have taken to do this.

Remember the squiggle!



Just like your personal statement, it's important that your portfolio is relevant to the course that you are applying for. For example, if you're applying to 3D courses such as Architecture or Interior Design, you should include some 3D work or engagement with space.

Presentation and editing is vital – take pride in the work that you have created, and present it in a simple and easy to view way.

Documenting your work

Photographing your work

- For larger pieces of work, or if you do not have a scanner, you will need to photograph it.
- You will need a clean space with good lighting – natural is best if you don't have professional studio lights.
- Place your work against a large sheet of white paper. For 3D work you can create a curved background with this too. Alternatively you can tack your work to a clean, white wall.
- Some work will photograph better on-location

Camera

- A digital camera is handy – but your mobile phone camera should be good enough.
- For flat work, take your photographs as close to your work as possible. For 3D work, make sure you have good space around your work. You might also want to photograph your work from different angles.
- Make sure that flash is turned off, and if possible adjust the white balance of your camera to match the light you are using.
- You might want to use a tripod for good balance.

Scanning your work

- For smaller work and for sketchbooks, it's probably easier to use a scanner.
- All software is different – so work out what you need to do on the scanner that you have. Save each image as you go.
- For bulky sketchbooks you might need to press down as it scans to avoid a grey shadow on the spine of the book.

Editing your work

- You can edit your photographs to crop, straighten or adjust brightness or white balance where necessary – but this isn't the time to show off your photoshop wizardry. Keep it simple and minimal.
- Any photo-editing software will do – you can downloads Paint.net for free from www.getpaint.net

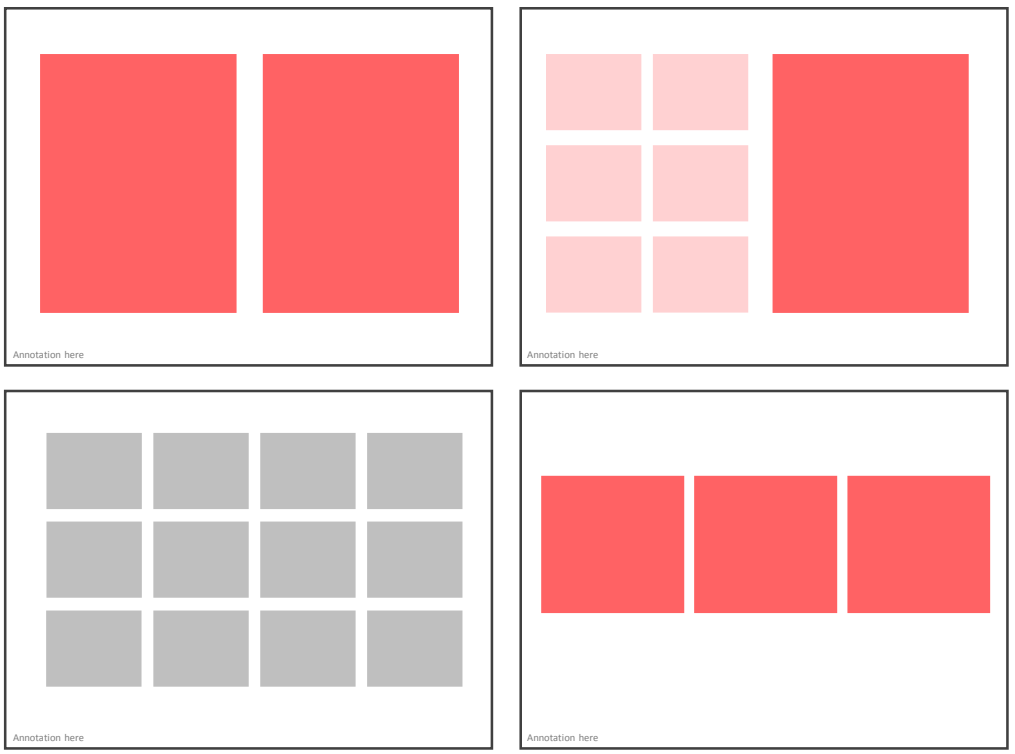
Putting your slides together

You can use various software to do this – but the ACES favourite is Microsoft Powerpoint as it's easy to move your work around and you can save it in a variety of formats (e.g. PDF or JPEG).

Getting started

- Open PowerPoint and create 15 (or 25 for GSA) blank slides. It's a good idea to make them 'standard' width, rather than widescreen. You can edit your dimensions later if required (e.g. for ECA).
- You can start to Import your photographs and arrange them on your slides.
- It's a good idea to have a rough plan of what each slide will show as you go along – but powerpoint makes it so easy to move things around. Be flexible!
- Presentation is important, so take care in how you arrange your work. Pay attention to the details – align your work well, make good use of the space and include multiple images per slide.
- You can include photography, film and animation work.
- For 'final' pieces you might want to give it a whole slide.

Example layouts – but it really depends on your work!



Annotation and text

- A small amount of text on each slide is a good idea as it will help selectors know what they are looking at.
- Keep it simple and get to the point – your work should speak for itself.
- Use a clean font and keep it quite small (size 12 maximum). Grey text can often be less intrusive than black.
- Make sure that your text is aligned with the rest of your work.
- Edinburgh College of Art allow you to write a small amount of text with each JPEG that you upload.
- Glasgow School of Art require a 500 word statement about your creative work.

Saving your portfolio

Once you're all done arranging your work, you should compress your images. This will reduce the overall file size. To do this:

- Click on any image
- Go to the format tab and click on compress pictures
- Untick the 'apply only to this picture' box and ensure the 'delete cropped areas of pictures' is ticked.
- Try selecting the highest target output possible e.g. 'print'
- Click ok

Saving your portfolio as a PDF

File > Save As > PDF - Simple!

If your PDF file size is over the limit then go back to your PowerPoint and compress your images again, but select a lower target output e.g. screen. Re-save your PDF – the file size should be smaller.

Saving your images as JPEGs

This is slightly more complicated.

- File > Save As > Choose your folder location (make it easy!)
- Select JPEG in the 'save as type' drop down > Edit the File Name e.g. Joe Bloggs – UCAS ID - GSA Portfolio >
- Click ok
- A box will pop up 'Which slides do you want to export' > Click 'All Slides'
- Find the folder and JPEGS – check each one is under the MB limit by clicking on it. At the bottom it should say how big it is.

Resizing your JPEGs

If the file size is too big:

Option 1

- Repeat the image compression in your PowerPoint, and re-save all of your JPEGs

Option 2

- Open each JPEG in Photoshop/Paint
- Resize your image by percentage – this will depend on how over-sized your image is. Try 95% at first.
- Save your image, check it again. NOTE – Photoshop might show the file size as larger than it actually is, so check File Manager or Computer.
- Repeat until it is below the file size limit.

Saving your portfolio

Resizing your JPEGs – If the pixel dimensions are too big

- Open each JPEG in Photoshop/Paint
- Resize your image by pixels – put the required pixel number in the width box, and the height should automatically change so that it keeps its shape too.
- Click ok
- Save your image.

...and the most important thing?

BACK UP YOUR WORK AS YOU GO!
SAVE IT IN MULTIPLE LOCATIONS!

Uploading your portfolio

You will receive instructions from each of the courses that you have applied for – be sure to follow them carefully.

Most universities now have an online portal that you will need to log in to. Check what you need in advance and make sure that any log in details are working.

What happens next?

You should receive confirmation that the university has received your portfolio.

If the university/course only requires a digital portfolio (no interview) then you will receive a decision from them in due course.

If the university/course is using the digital portfolio as part of the selection for interview, then you will either be invited to an interview or be rejected.

Sometimes this process can take several weeks. Remember – no news is not bad news!

Portfolio Plan

University

Course

Portfolio requirements

My work

To do list

Edinburgh (all courses, not Arch)
Glasgow (Fine Art)
Napier (all creative courses)

Dundee (Architecture, Direct Entry)
Glasgow (Architecture, Design)

21	16	11	6	1
22	17	12	7	2
23	18	13	8	3
24	19	14	9	4
25	20	15	10	5

Notes

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