

Research paper:
Contextual information on the fees
guidance provided by a-n The Artists
Information Company

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In 2014, Arts Council England stated that National Portfolio Organisations and applicants to Grants for the Arts should pay artists ‘fairly and properly’. Its guidance states that artists’ fees should be: ‘In line with recognised codes of practice set by the relevant lead bodies. Salaries, fees and subsistence arrangements should be as good as or better than those agreed by any relevant sector organisations.’

a-n is acknowledged by Arts Council England to be ‘the effective lead body for visual artists’ and a-n guidance on artist rates and fees is widely acknowledged as the visual arts sector standard in England. Arts Council England recommends a-n guidance is used by applicants to Grants for the Arts funding in order to ensure that adequate payment for artists and freelance professionals is included in budgets. This is an aspect of funding applications that is looked at carefully during Arts Council England’s assessment procedure, and therefore applicants are advised to pay particular attention to this area. Given Arts Council England no longer provides its own advice on rates, the provision and rigour of a-n’s guidance is particularly important.

Evidence shows variable practice within many arts organisations and individual projects. As part of the Paying Artist campaign – and a-n’s commitment to ensuring the quality of its advice and resources - independent arts professional Dany Louise was asked to investigate sources of advice within and external to the visual arts and wider arts sector, anchoring a-n’s guidance within this context, and within other comparable workforce segments.

Context

Research commissioned by a-n from the University of Newcastle in 2004 highlighted that earnings of visual artists were, overall, low in comparison with other professional workers with similar levels of education, expertise and commitment. This situation has not substantially changed in recent years, and other research that reinforces and adds to this data is listed at the end of this document.

a-n has subsequently undertaken significant and regular research on artists' livelihoods, and found that rates of pay for artists' services are being eroded, and with it, the annual income artists achieve through their art practice. The most visible example is the demise of the Artist's Exhibition Fee, with only a minority of galleries paying artists this fee – and at significantly varied rates. Artists are increasingly being expected to work for little or no money, at all professional levels from the local to the international (for example, the curator of Documenta 13 in 2012 did not provide payment to the exhibited artists, saying that the "honour" of being exhibited was sufficient).

Several advice organisations discuss how to calculate rates and fees, however many organisations in the UK are shy of issuing documents detailing standard or minimum rates. According to Artquest, "the UK Government has deemed providing sample rates as anti-competitive, and therefore neither Artquest nor any other advice agency can legally provide these." a-n has taken legal advice on this matter and finds this not to be the case, however this perception may explain a reticence from some organisations to offer explicit rates.

Notwithstanding this, Visual Arts Ireland, Scottish Artists Union and CARFAC (Canada) provide standalone rates, or practical tools with which to calculate fees (detailed below). Other organisations simply rehash the basic principles within a short narrative – that is, the need to take into account experience, overheads, the type of opportunity, and market rates. Arts Council England and Artquest recommend the use of the a-n fees guidance and toolkit, providing links to this information.

Broadly, there are two distinct approaches to offering guidance:

- (1) The 'market-led' approach, which identifies what comparable freelancers are charging for similar work, balanced with a judgement of what the market will bear.
- (2) The 'business planning' approach, which calculates overheads, set against required income, balanced with experience and career stage.

The a-n guidance and toolkit adopts this second approach, judging it to be more robust, more likely to provide steady and appropriate income, and being less subject to the vagaries of a fluctuating market.

Considerations in calculating artists' rates and fees

Providing guidance for artists' rates and fees needs to take into account a range of complicating factors. For these reasons, guidance is not a simple case of providing sample hourly, day, week or monthly rates. Where these do appear, there is generally consideration of various aspects behind the published figures – and usually, considerable detail of how rates are arrived at is published alongside.

A common feature is acknowledgement that the majority of artists are self-employed freelancers:

“Visual artists are around three times as likely as the working population in general to be self-employed. As self-employed people, they negotiate remuneration and other conditions such as payment for materials, timing of payments and deadlines on an individual basis with client organisations”.

The nature of freelancing means that overheads are born by the practitioner, (rather than an employing organisation), which for artists and arts organisers often means rent of a studio or office, and the usual costs associated with workspace. Tax and National Insurance are still payable, and holidays and sick pay have to be taken unpaid. Any pension provision is made by the freelancer. The costs of these and other aspects of working life need to be taken into account when considering rates of pay for artists and other freelance professionals:

- Payment for different types of work

Artist's work includes commissions for new work, solo or group exhibitions, performance, talks, workshops, residencies and teaching. Within these, planning, organisation, preparation, working with local communities, installation, publicity and other tasks may be required. The nature of the work therefore needs to be accurately reflected within the fees offered.

A curator, project manager, marketer or evaluation specialist will be required to undertake similarly detailed work.

- Level of experience

Research shows that there is strong support for the principle that experienced artists and arts freelancers should be paid more than less experienced artists, as their skills and practice are more developed. Experience is gauged in a range of ways, but common methods include CV and portfolio, and number of years spent as a practicing artist.

- Size of employing organisation

There is a general expectation that larger publicly funded organisations should be able to afford higher rates than smaller, less well funded, organisations. Annual turnover is seen as a reasonable measure of the size of an organisation, and therefore this figure is used in several methodologies advising artists how to calculate their rates (for example, CARFAC and Visual Artists Ireland).

- Contract length or input time required

Contract length can have two very different effects. A large commission can be expected to attract a fee that is consistent with a day rate. But an educational contract or residency is often paid at a lower rate, reflecting a relative security of income, or the provision of other benefits such as accommodation and subsistence.

- Exhibition Payment Fee

This is the fee paid to an artist for the use of their work in a public setting. Publicly available guidelines suggest that it should vary according to the number of works, the length of exhibiting time, and whether it is new work. There are examples of an additional 'loan fee' also being recommended, acknowledging that an artist cannot use the work while it is on loan to a specific institution or organisation. Theorised to sit within the Copyright Law framework (as it is in Canada), in the UK, exhibition payment fees has a muddled history. While it was championed by arts funding bodies, a coherent system was never introduced and it seems to have become a low priority in policy circles since 2000. Consequently, the current situation is that a minority of organisations pay an exhibition fee; others roll it into the project fee; and others pay nothing at all in this respect.

- Provision of production, installation and marketing costs

There is a tendency to offer a flat fee for small commissions intended to cover all expenses and production costs. This may also include working with specific community groups, and marketing activities. a-n recommends that fees are separated from production, installation and marketing costs.

a-n provision

a-n was commissioned by Arts Council England in 2004 to research and publish a suitable framework for artists' fees and charges that reflect artists' career stage, experience level and overheads, and the nature of self-employment. Additionally, the research was required to be in line with, and updated against, uplifts within comparator professions.

The resulting sample day rates were designed to provide funders, commissioners and employers with broad guidance for budgeting and estimating purposes. Since then, a-n has added to the body of research regarding artists pay, with its own research, and drawing on research made available by other relevant organisations, and including international comparisons.

Rather than simply provide specific flat or minimum rates, the a-n guidance is situated within a matrix that provides for different levels of:

- Overheads
- Annual income
- Years of experience

A range of fee calculations is presented according to these variables, based on a calculation of 177 fee paying working days in a year. This recognises that all freelancers must spend unpaid time administering their businesses and gaining contracts. Artists and other freelance arts professionals are able to locate themselves appropriately within the matrix. This allows artists and arts organisers as users, and commissioners and project managers, to make more nuanced judgements about daily rates of pay. They can understand how and why a more ambitious project that requires an experienced artist, or other freelancer, will cost more.

Sitting behind the matrix is a specially designed toolkit created by accountant Richard Murphy. The toolkit encourages users to calculate their specific annual costs and income expectations and therefore produce their own rates for budgets and estimates, based on their specific circumstances. This is a comprehensive tool that covers many eventualities, and can, if the user chooses, be used to generate formal quotes.

The toolkit is constructed with a concentration on pricing the services that many artists supply, as opposed to any products they sell. Rates are benchmarked against the full time wages of a teacher, identified as an appropriate comparator profession. The reasoning for identifying teaching as a comparator profession is:

- Because most artists and arts professionals have a similar level of qualification (and frequently higher level qualifications).
- Artists and organisers working in organisational, residency, workshop, public realm or socially engaged practice require similar inter-personal, planning and management skills.
- Teachers usually have a specialist subject and knowledge on top of their generic teaching skills, as artists have their own arts practice on top of the other skills required to work in the visual arts sector.

The a-n model effectively uses an accumulative day rate, that is, rates do not vary according to the length of contract. A weekly rate is calculated by multiplying the daily rate x five, etc. The advantage of this is that it provides clarity for everyone concerned, and helps avoid potential downward pressure on rates. Therefore, no weekly or monthly rates are given in the guidance.

Residency rates

Rates for residencies tend to be set by the host organisation and vary dramatically, with little room for negotiation by the artist. a-n has commissioned in-depth research on rates and offers regarding residencies and other professional development opportunities. Guidance for artists on this topic will be published shortly on the a-n website.

Exhibition fees

As part of its core mission, a-n is currently working with its members, the broader visual arts sector and Arts Council England to build consensus on a suitable methodology to calculate and pay exhibition fees.

Summary features of a-n guidance

- Takes the business planning approach
- Equally suitable for artists, and for other freelance arts professionals
- Flexible to individual circumstances
- Based on axis of experience, overheads and required income
- Benchmarked against full-time wage of teachers
- Updated in line with inflation rates
- Updated in line with teachers' incremental pay scales
- Toolkit identifies day rate with overhead costs only
- Toolkit identifies labour rate only
- Free to access toolkit (free registration required)

a-n Guidance on fees and day rates for visual artists 2015

Experience level	Annual income excluding overheads	Day rates with overheads £5k per annum	Day rates with overheads £10K per annum	Day rates with overheads £15K per annum
New graduate	£24,000	£164	£192	£220
1 year	£25,388	£172	£200	£228
2 years	£27,462	£183	£212	£240
3 years	£29,304	£194	£222	£250
4 years	£30,825	£202	£231	£259
5 years	£32,083	£210	£238	£266
6 years	£33,472	£217	£246	£274
7 years	£34,862	£225	£253	£282
8 years	£36,252	£233	£261	£288
9 years	£37,640	£241	£269	£297
10 years*	£39,030	£249	£277	£305

* Once an artist has more than 10 years' experience, the rate they can charge will depend on other external factors such as an artist's art world track record and/or unique attributes and market forces.

Use by artists of such rates assumes suitable professional conduct as set out in [The Code of Practice for the Visual Arts](#) and other [good practice](#) documents for artists, commissioners and employers on www.a-n.co.uk

How does a-n guidance compare with other sources of advice?

The service-based approach has proved to be appropriate. Due to changes in cultural and other public policy over the last 10 years, there is a significantly increased volume of service-based opportunities that have become a core part of the arts employment landscape.

However from the employer's perspective, it might be possible – given time constraints and perhaps limited knowledge – that they would prefer an adaption of the sample day rates that can be read from their perspective and contains the 'at a glance' information they need, and include weekly, monthly and project fee rates.

A strength of the toolkit is that it acknowledges the influence of the market. While arts work has been undervalued in all art forms, and the current difficult funding climate has also impacted on rates of pay (not just in the arts), there are still generally accepted payscale 'norms' that are the legacy of good practice and a healthier market. The toolkit accepts this to be case and counsels that artists and arts professionals need to keep their rates within these norms – without suggesting what they are. Further, rates are increased with inflation, and advice suggests specific adjustment for London weighting.

Different organisations use varying methods for calculating rates, so a strict comparison is not possible. However comparing rate outcomes is possible. a-n rates on the whole sit within an average figure. For example, a-n day rates (for a seven hour day) are slightly higher than the Scottish Artist Union hourly rates, but roughly coincide on some of the day rates. Visual artists Ireland rates are slightly higher than a-n suggested rates. Within other artforms, for example, dance, theatre and literature, a-n rates, are, if anything, generally lower. Dance and theatre fee rates are negotiated by industry bodies such as Equity and the Independent Theatre Council, and have been adopted by many industry employers.

Comparative information

1. Scottish Artists Union (SAU)

The SAU has from its inception been concerned with establishing recognised national standards in artists' contracts and payments. It has prepared some typical rates of pay that covers short-term contracts, sessional work and residencies that are paid on a self-employed status basis. SAU also considers number of years of experience as a variable factor, and the expectation that an experienced artist should be paid more than a less experienced one.

SAU rates of pay 2014 – 15

Hourly Rates:

£20.25 p/hr new graduate artist

£26.25 p/hr 3 yrs + experience

£31.25 p/hr 5 yrs + experience

Sessional Rates:

£160 p/day (£ 80 p/ ½ day) new graduate artist

£210 p/day (£105 p/ ½ day) 3 yrs experience

£260 p/day (£130 p/ ½ day) 5 yrs+ experience

Residency Rates:

£22,100 p/annum (pro rata) new graduate artist

£32,500 p/annum (pro rata) 5 years + experience

NB exhibition fees are not included.

2. Visual Artists Ireland

The representative advocacy group for all visual artists based in Ireland. Visual Artists Ireland has undertaken research both inside and outside of Ireland to create a comprehensive set of guidelines for payments for professional visual artists. The organisation consulted with artists, arts organisations and funding bodies, as well as key expert organisations internationally to inform its

rates, last updated December 2013. Although its guidance is comprehensive and nuanced for many circumstances, not included are residency fees.

It suggests a three step process. The first step categorises the experience of the artist as either (1), (2) or (3); the second categorises the organisation by turnover, type of event and type of opportunity; and the third step adds additional fees for types of work undertaken as part of the opportunity such as talks and workshops. It has created complex spreadsheets that cover several different types of exhibiting opportunities, and categorise fees as 'Loan' and 'New Work' fees; and daily rates for project preparation; installation fee; and project planning. The range of fees and factors affecting them are too complex to reproduce here, but are found on a downloadable spreadsheet from visualartists.ie

Fees for Artists Talks range from £75 - £250 with planning time from £25 - £75 an hour, depending on artist's experience ('category').

Workshops range from £150 - £400

Participation in a selection panel £200 - £550

Participation on an interview panel £150 - £500

Exhibition fees

The Visual Artists Ireland formula provides the artist with a method to identify what their exhibition fees should be based on a range of factors that include:

- Turnover of the host organisation
- Solo or group show
- New work or previously seen

Usefully included is 'Moving Image' and 'Soundwork Licence' fees, which depends on length of the work and number of screenings and are based on fees produced by Filmbank UK.

My own assessment of these fees are that they represent an ideal. Galleries and other organisations that are working with the visual arts should note them when they are budgeting. Its use of scale and artist categories is both useful and realistic.

3. Artquest

Artquest shares resources, networks and opportunities for visual arts practice. Its information presents short narratives on factors affecting rates that should be considered. For practical guidance, it recommends external sites, including the a-n toolkit.

- a-n The artist's fees toolkit: 18 page web toolkit for calculating a daily rate, working out from what you need to earn.
- Freelance Vanity: thoughtful article considering issues for setting freelance rates (hybrid between market approach and business planning approach).

4. The Design Trust

The Design Trust is an online business school for designers and makers, offering practical, expert training and support to entrepreneurial creatives. It suggests using similar principles to that used by a-n; that is, calculating overheads, deciding on desired income level, and recognising that, as a freelancer, only 60-70% of your working time may be invoiced for. It provides a useful example for calculating hourly and daily rates, and emphasises that the quid pro quo of longer contracts is often a reduction in these rates.

5. Creative Boom

'Inspiration and ideas for creatives', this site had a weekly column on the Guardian Culture Professionals website in 2011. It takes the commercial market approach. 'Before you do anything else, do some research to see what other freelancers are charging for similar work in your area... Compare and come up with a rate you feel reflects your skills and experience, but make sure you're competitive.' This site also notes a commercial truism: 'You'll soon realise that one day/hourly rate won't suit everyone.'

Cites personal knowledge of rates:

Web/graphic designers and illustrators £15-£55 per hour

Web/software developers £25-£80

Copywriters £20 to £50 per hour.

Sample international comparator

Other international comparators are in the public domain. a-n will shortly be making a more comprehensive range of these available as part of the Paying Artist campaign documents.

6. Canadian Artists Representation Copyright Collective

In Canada, the Copyright Act provides artists with the right to require compensation for the use of their works when exhibited publicly. In 1988, Canadian artists' association CARFAC lobbied for the inclusion of this right and succeeded. Whilst Canada Council funding requirements made it easier for CARFAC to make artists' fees common practice, the Exhibition Right within the Copyright Act enshrines such fees in law.

Other artforms and comparative professions

1. Dancers

Equity, the trade union for the performing arts, has negotiated minimum weekly pay rates with the Independent Theatre Council (ITC) of £420. This rate is applicable to rehearsal and performance weeks and is mostly used by dance companies that have received Arts Council funding or funding from other major bodies. Pay varies according to the type and size of theatre and performers may earn significantly more for film and television work. Subsistence and accommodation payments are included in Equity contracts and some contracts may include royalties for recorded work.

An experienced dancer may earn £450 - £500 per week. This can rise to £620 per week for a West End show and some performers will earn more.

2. Musicians

According to a survey for solo instrumentalists by the Incorporated Society of Musicians (ISM) , typical performance fees range from £100 - £250. Most music teachers charged between £25 - £36 per hour across the UK, although this fee can be much higher in London. According to the Musicians' Union (MU) , rates for orchestral rank-and-file musicians range from £92.25 - £132 upwards for concert performances. Rates for salaried musicians vary from orchestra to orchestra but range from approximately £26,000 - £37,000 (in London). The results of a survey of composition commission rates carried out by the British Academy of Songwriters, Composers and Authors (BASCA) is available on the Incorporated Society of Musicians, and show wide variation.

3. Writers

The Society of Authors recommends the use of [Andrew Bibby's 'Freelance Ready Reckoner 2013-2014'](#). This provides comparable freelance day rates for equivalent annual gross salaries for employees in the range £20,000-£60,000. Experience is not included. Although a different methodology is used, and so comparison is not like-with-like, the recommended day rates are slightly higher than the a-n sample rates. As an example, for the equivalent of a £30,000 wage, a-n guidance ranges from £198 - £255, while Bibby's suggest £328.

The Society of Authors surveyed its Children's Writers and Illustrator Group (CWIG) members at the end of 2013. Members reported a wide range of fees, from £350-750 for a full day to £150-500 for a half-day plus travel and expenses; or single fee of £150-250 plus travel for a single session (not exceeding an hour) when the author or illustrator is visiting a local school/library or carrying out a number of separate visits in the same area.

The [Scottish Book Trust](#) offers [Live Literature Funding](#) for selected schools and library events in Scotland. Since 2005 it has part-funded a fee of £150 plus travel and subsistence expenses per one hour event.

4. Theatre workers

The [ITC \(Independent Theatre Council\)](#) negotiates minimum rates of pay, on behalf of its members, with the appropriate unions for: administrative staff, choreographers, designers, directors, fight directors, performers, stage managers and writers. It recommends the following rates for 2014-2015:

Director's Fee (full length play)	£1404
Director's Fee (short length play)	£971
Weekly Exclusive Services Payment	£430
Artistic/Resident Directors	£522
Designers: design fee	£2351
Weekly fee for set building	£460
Choreographers: minimum fee	£1735
Weekly fee	£430
Daily Rate	£140
Session Rate (3 hours)	£90

5. Teachers pay scales*

Classroom Teachers England and Wales (excluding London and the Fringe)		
Spine point	1 Sept 2013 to 31 Aug 2014	1 Sept 2014 to 31 Aug 2015
Main pay range		
Min M1	£21,804	£22,023
M2	£23,528	£23,764
M3	£25,420	£25,675
M4	£27,376	£27,650
M5	£29,533	£29,829
Max M6	£31,868	£32,187
Upper pay range		
Min U1	£34,523	£34,869
U2	£35,802	£36,161
Max U3	£37,124	£37,496

* rates sourced from www.naswt.org.uk

Other sources of research information

[Paying Artists research: Phase 1 findings](#), DHA Communications commissioned by a-n.
Statistics relating to artist's exhibiting practice and earnings.

[Artists work in 2012](#), a-n

An analysis and commentary on artists' work and opportunities in 2012.

[Artists work in 2011](#), a-n

An analysis and commentary on artists' work and opportunities in 2011.

[Big artists' survey 2011 – the results](#), a-n

Results of AIR and a-n's largest ever artists' survey into their pay and working conditions.

[Changing face of artists employment](#), a-n

Explores the affect of the economic recession on the livelihoods of artists in terms of access to employment and career opportunities and raises concerns about how artists' practice is likely to fare in this period of arts austerity.

[Summary of Artists Pensions Research](#), Arts Council England, 2007

Powerpoint presentation summarising the results of research commissioned by Arts Council England into artists pensions. Research demonstrates that 70% of artists have no pension provision, with 56% citing lack of affordability as the reason why, despite 60% of respondents being in full-time work.

[Guidance on Internships in the Arts](#), Arts Council England, November 2011

Downloadable pdf giving guidance on good practice in offering internships in the arts. Recognising the mutual benefits of a well-planned internship for individuals interested in a career in the arts and for arts organisations themselves, this document clarifies the responsibilities and legal obligations of arts organisations and other employers when offering this kind of position.

[Creative Employment Programme](#), Creative & Cultural Skills

The Creative Employment Programme is a £15m fund to support the creation of traineeships, formal apprenticeship and paid internship opportunities in England for young unemployed people aged 16-24 wanting to pursue a career in the arts and cultural sector. The website gives details of how to apply for part wage grants to employers who create new apprenticeship and internship job opportunities.

When should you Work for Free? *Creative Choices*, Creative & Cultural Skills , December 2013

Article discussing the differences between working for no pay, as a freelancer, but not for nothing. Identifies circumstances when it might prove to be beneficial to work pro-bono if there are other valuable returns.

Advice on Freelance Rights, *Creative Choices*, Creative & Cultural Skills, May 2014

Working freelance can mean sacrificing employment rights, although flexibility, variety and potentially higher pay may compensate for this. This short article outlines some rights freelancers do have.

Getting Paid, Emily Speed, June 2013

Notes the ubiquity of non-refundable entrance fees for visual artists to apply for competitive exhibition opportunities at which the probability of success may well be quite low. "The many fund the very few" who may be chosen. Also notes that there is unlikely to be expenses available for the costs of transporting work to the location should the application be successful. For this artist, it adds up to a "no entrance fee" rule.

Art Party provocation: A feast for sore eyes, Susan Jones, November 2013

In her provocation for the Art Party Conference in Scarborough, the then a-n Director Susan Jones argues that while it's widely stated that artists are the main menu in the gallery and exhibition process, new approaches are needed to provide the financial support they need. "Just imagine, if every salaried visual arts professional 'donated' two hours of their weekly salary to – say – a grant fund for artists in their communities, to help artists sustain their practice."

Working Together, Rachel Rayns

Clearly sets out the artist's very sensible contractual work terms and conditions. Generously gives permission for others to use them.

Dany Louise is a visual arts specialist who writes about visual arts and cultural policy. She is author of [The Interpretation Matters Handbook](#)