Artists' Union England

AUE RATES OF PAY GUIDELINES
updated March 2026

SECTION 1 – LABOUR BY THE HOUR OR DAY

Hourly Rates

£31.00 per hour new graduate artist
£37.10 per hour 3 yrs+ experience
£45.80 per hour 5 yrs+ experience
£50.40 per hour Lead Artist/Project Manager*

Day rates are based on an 8-hour day. The recommended minimum 'call' is for a half day session. Additional hours over 8-hours should be at a minimum of the appropriate hourly rate (see above).

Sessional/Daily Rates

£248.00 per day / £136.40 ½ day new graduate artist
£296.80 per day / £163.20 ½ day 3 yrs+ experience
£366.40 per day / £201.50 ½ day 5 yrs+ experience
£403.00 per day / £221.70 ½ day Lead Artist/Project Manager

See below for more detail about pay rates for particular types of artistic labour.

** The Lead Artist / Project Manager rate is calculated with a 10% increase on highest hourly rate to reflect the greater responsibilities held with managing a project, which also may involve supervision of other artists*

ABOUT THESE RATES:

This document is designed to help artists' and their commissioners / employers to determine fair remuneration for artists' labour. Artists should also use these guidelines when paying other artists. Artists' Union England has drawn upon existing documents produced by other unions, especially Scottish Artists' Union. The rationale and source of each section is explained in the appendices at the end of the document.

Artists carry out many tasks that merit fair remuneration and this list is not considered exhaustive. These rates of pay should apply to a wide range of freelance and short contract employment **for artists, working within the**

field of visual art (refer to AUE's membership criteria for more details) – from consultancy work, project planning and development, exhibition fees and all aspects of workshop delivery (set up, execution, clear up) and other freelance activity. They do not include equipment rental costs, travel costs, publication costs, insurance or shipping, or any other cost associated with art production (or VAT where relevant) – they are compensation for an artist's time and labour only.

It is important to recognise that these figures do not include commitments for Income Tax or National Insurance Contributions. Self-employed people are recommended to set aside 25% of their earnings to meet these obligations.

In the future, AUE aims to produce separate guidelines on exhibition fees and sales. This document applies to work carried out by an artist **as an artist.** Therefore, these rates may not apply to, for example, front of house work, technician work, teaching in an institution, documentation – artists may want to consult rates of pay guidelines from other relevant unions for these activities. **Artists working regularly in higher or further education** should contact the University and College Union for relevant rates and advice – AUE considers them to be working in the first instance as teachers, and are paid accordingly (in line with peers in other subject areas).

These Typical Rates of Pay are provided for guidance purposes, artists are at all times free to negotiate rates of pay different to those set out above. Rates assume appropriate professional conduct by the artist themselves.

The variations in rates relate to qualifications/experience, which are defined by 'years as a working artist', and would be evidenced by a professional CV, indicating the artist's art-world track record and/or unique attributes.
(NB – these rates are derived from SAU's rates of pay guidelines – see appendix 1)

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SECTION 2 - SESSIONAL RATES
ADJUSTED ACCORDING TO NATURE OF WORK

Presentation (100% of generic rate)

£248.00 per day / £136.40 ½ day new graduate artist
£296.80 per day / £163.20 ½ day 3 yrs+ experience
£366.40 per day / £201.50 ½ day 5 yrs+ experience

Presentation would include speaking or teaching about an artist's own work, or any area of expertise associated with the work or life as an artist, leading workshops or tours, speaking to school groups, etc.

Consultation (100% of generic rate)

£248.00 per day / £136.40 ½ day new graduate artist
£296.80 per day / £163.20 ½ day 3 yrs+ experience
£366.40 per day / £201.50 ½ day 5 yrs+ experience

Consultation refers to giving advice, input or opinions that might be associated with project development, exhibitions, or commissions concerning the artist's own production, or participation in a consultative process drawing on artistic expertise, e.g. policy development in the cultural arena, or participation in a jury or other selection process.

Installation (89% of generic rate)

£220.70 per day / £121.40 ½ day new graduate artist
£264.20 per day / £145.30 ½ day 3 yrs+ experience
£326.10 per day / £179.40 ½ day 5 yrs+ experience

Installation means overseeing or participation in the installation or de-installation of works for an exhibition on the exhibitor's premises. Activities associated with installation may include unpacking or packing of works, placing works in an exhibition space, ordering, hanging, adjustment of equipment, etc.

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Preparation (79% of generic rate)

£195.90 per day / £107.70 ½ day new graduate artist
£234.50 per day / £129.00 ½ day 3 yrs+ experience
£289.50 per day / £159.20 ½ day 5 yrs+ experience

Preparation is the work associated with producing an exhibition that is done outside the exhibitor's premises. Preparation might include correspondence, telephone calls, preparing plans or reproductions, writing statements, proof-reading, overseeing packing and shipping arrangements, and so on.

SECTION 3 – RESIDENCY RATES

£35,712.00 per annum (pro rata) new graduate artist

£42,739.20 per annum (pro rata) 3 yrs+ experience

£52,761.60 per annum (pro rata) 5 yrs+ experience

If a residency lasts for 20+ working days, it should be calculated on a pro rata basis from the figures above. Residencies of under 20 working days should be remunerated as day rates using the figures in section 1. The variations in rates relate to qualifications/experience as above.

These residency rates are guidelines aimed at organisations who offer artists' residencies, where an artist is focusing exclusively on their development for the duration and are also in receipt of the other benefits that come with being on a residency, eg. living and working space.

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SECTION 4 – SCREENING PRESENTATION FEES (BASED ON LUX SCREENING FEES)

For a single presentation of a work in a group programme of screened video and/or film works, for example in a gallery or cinema, the artist should expect a fee, excluding expenses of presentation (technical, transport etc.) of at least £75.00 – although artists should negotiate a higher fee if they want. Tthis is derived from the LUX collection's lowest rental rate for a film of 1-5 minutes in length. For longer films, LUX give the following rates which can also be used as a guide for negotiations:

Over 6 mins £100
Over 20 mins £150
Over 60 mins £200
Over 120 mins £270

SECTION 5 – PERFORMANCE PRESENTATION FEES

Performance fees should be worked out using the hourly/sessional rates above. Artists and employers should consider whether performers other than the artist themselves should be paid in this scale, or another more relevant scale (for example, BECTU's). Fees do not include general equipment (i.e. lights, projectors, video, audio) that should be provided by the gallery / host. Special equipment integral to the work is the responsibility of the artist. Fees do not include artists' travel costs.

SECTION 6 – SOCIAL PRACTICE FEES

Artists' Union England recognise that artists working in social practice may find it difficult to categorise long projects. We suggest that artists use the structures above, but acknowledge that an hourly or day rate might have to be spread over a much longer period of time. For example, 10 days at £345.11 per day might be available to be negotiated with community partners over a period of, for example, 6 months or 1 year. It should be noted that artists working in this manner need to be careful to still charge properly for work carried out.

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Appendix 1 – Scottish Artist Union's rationale for current rates of pay

"SAU Executive Typical Rates of Pay for Visual & Applied Artists in Scotland, 2014 - 15 and 2019/20 updated rates

The Typical Rates of Pay have been prepared on the following basis:

Hourly Rates of Pay as a comparison to paid employment. To achieve this, these figures are put into the
following calculation.

ax(24x48)–7000 =b
37 x 52

The above calculation represents the extrapolation, where a is the contracted hourly rate and b is the equivalent hourly rate of a conventional employee annual salary. (24 x 48) represents the artists maximum earnings multiplier where 24 hrs (65%) is the optimum number of earning hours a week, based on a 65:35 ratio calculation, where 35% of working time is required for research, management and development, and 48 is the maximum number of earning weeks in one year that the artist can have (4 weeks unpaid annual leave). 7000 is the necessary subtraction of the average cost of professional overheads (studio costs, management and admin, research and development etc).

This cumulative total is divided by a conventional salary equation of (37 x 52) where 37 hrs work per week is multiplied by 52 working weeks (paid annual leave) to provide the b equivalent. If we now apply the salaries calculation to our new Typical Rates of Pay it becomes evident that in real terms what we are proposing remain modest figures that still represent low level artist's incomes. This is however a further step in the process designed to bring visual and applied artists to an equitable position with their contemporaries in other arts fields and beyond."

Appendix 2 – A note on recalculating the 2026/7 AUE rates of pay:

Rates brought back into line with Scottish Artists Union where relevant, following varying rises for inflation over the years. For 2026/2027, a 2% rise has been applied to the rates for artists and makers with 3+ and 5+ years of

experience, and the graduate rate has been increased by 5.5% (to bring comparable employment hourly rates in line with The Real Living Wage of £13.45 and the London Living Wage of £14.80) These adjustments aim to maintain the value of artists' work in today's economy.

AUE Lead Artist Rate calculated as a 10% increase on 5yr rate (rounded to the nearest £0.10)
AUE Half Date rate calculated as 55% of Full Day Rate (rounded to the nearest £0.10)

Appendix 3 – How we calculated residency rates:

SAU's working formula above states that 1152 hours is the optimum number of earning hours per year (24 hours x 48 weeks). We can break down the 1152 hours into 'days per year' by dividing the 1152 by 8 (working hours per day), which gives us the equivalent of 144 optimum number of earning days per year. I.e. day rates x 144 to reach the result. Longer residencies are calculated in this way because they are a sustained period of payment. As above, residencies under 20 days should be paid as day rates.

Appendix 4 – Sessional Rates adjusted according to nature of work

The definitions in this section are based on CARFAC's rates of pay document and are in place to cover the “many tasks artists carry out as part of their career that merit fair remuneration” The varying percentage rates reflect the different amount of work/input necessary for each activity. The 100% rate is based on our hourly rates of pay, which does adjust them downwards for some activities.

AUE thanks our sister unions for their research and hard work