

SAU Executive

Typical Recommended Rates of Pay (RRoP) for Visual & Applied Artists in Scotland, 2025-2026

The SAU has from its inception been concerned with establishing recognised national standards in artists' contracts and payments, as it is often difficult for artists to quantify the value of their work. We have therefore prepared some typical rates of pay which members may wish to use as a guide when negotiating payment for their work on short-term contracts, sessional work and residencies that are paid on a self-employed status basis.

SAU Rates of Pay 2025-2026

Recommended Rates of Pay should apply to a wide range of freelance and short contract employment from consultancy work, project planning and development, to all aspects of workshop delivery (set up, execution, clear up) and other freelance activity.

SAU have considered recent rates of inflation and recommend a 2% increase on last year's RRoP for artists and makers with 3+ years' experience and 3.5% increase for new graduates (to bring comparable employment hourly rates in line with *The Real Living Wage* of £12.60).

Rates exclude artist's expenses for a specific project and VAT where relevant.

Hourly Rates: £29.30 p/hr new graduate artist
 £36.30 p/hr with 3 yrs + experience
 £44.90 p/hr with 5 yrs + experience

Sessional Rates: £234.40 p/day (£117.20 p/ ½ day) new graduate artist
 £290.40 p/day (£145.20 p/ ½ day) with 3 yrs experience
 £359.20 p/day (£179.60 p/ ½ day) with 5 yrs+ experience

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.

Residency Rates: £31,671 p/annum (pro rata) new graduate artist
 £44,100 p/annum (pro rata) with 5 years + experience

All residencies should be calculated on a pro rata basis where the residency is of 20+ working days. The variations in rates relate to qualifications/experience as above.

Screening & Presentation Fees: £170.00 (Online) Screening Fee
 £180.00 Accompanying Talk Fee

These Recommended 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 Artist.

The Scottish Artists Union encourages all artists, organisations and those who wish to contract artists, to make use of this information.

The Recommended Rates of Pay have been prepared as a comparison to paid employment on the following basis, using the following calculation:

$$\frac{a \times (24 \times 48) - 9486}{37 \times 52} = b$$

$$29.29 (a) \times (1152) = £33,737.89 - £9,486.00 = £24,251.89 \text{ divided by } 1924 (37 \times 52) = £12.60 (b)$$

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%) are 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).

9486 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 paid 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 Recommended Rates of Pay it becomes evident that in real terms what we are proposing are modest figures that still represents a low level for 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.

Calculations:

SAU Rate (<i>a</i>)	Gross Earnings		Overheads		Salary		Gross Employee rate (<i>b</i>)
£29.29 p/hr =	£33,737.89	-	£9,486 =		£24,251.89 =		£12.60 p/hr
£37.45 p/hr =	£43,147.47	-	£9,486 =		£33,661.47 =		£17.50 p/hr
£46.27 p/hr =	£53,299.81	-	£9,486 =		£43,813.81 =		£22.77 p/hr

These Recommended Rates of Pay are provided for guidance purposes, artists are always free to negotiate rates of pay different to those set out above. Rates assume appropriate professional conduct by Artist.

It is important to recognise that these figures are GROSS EARNINGS. Self Employed people are recommended to set aside 25-30% of their earnings to meet their Income Tax and National Insurance Contribution obligations.

The Scottish Artists Union encourages all artists and those who wish to contract artists, to make use of this information