

Top Application Tips, FAQs and general advice.
TIPS ON WRITING A GOOD APPLICATION

Why do you want to do The Collective Studio? Have a think and make a list of what you might like to get out of it and why you want to do it. This can help form the backbone of your application. Over time we've come to prioritise the pastoral care, personal development, and creative evolution of Collective Studio members, with the idea that if these are in good health then career and professional opportunities are more likely to open up to you, so maybe think about looking at this question through these lenses.

Detail Try to give us an extra layer of information about yourself and your interest in joining The Collective Studio. We often get applications that repeat back information in the call-out but don't offer extra context. The more detail, description, and explanation you can add to your sentences the better, as this tells us more about you and what you'll get out of the programme. For example, don't just say "I'm interested in being part of a creative community through The Collective Studio", tell us why this is of interest, and how this relates to you and your practice. Don't be afraid of writing in your own voice and letting your enthusiasm, interests, personality and ideas come through!

Fill in the Blanks Don't assume we know everything you're thinking about, so make sure you spell things out and fill in the blanks for us.

Two-Way Street When writing your application – strike the balance between what you will get out of the opportunity and what you will bring to the experience. A good way to think about this is by imagining the Collective Studio as a series of communal, collaborative experiences where you temporarily park your individual practice, immerse yourself in the group activity, then see what filters back into your creative imagination after.

Background We receive a lot of applications, so it's wonderful to see a bit more depth about why you want to be part of The Collective Studio, and the whole community based at The NewBridge Project – this is likely to elevate applications from the 'maybe' to the 'definitely' pile. Have a look at our website and find out more about what we do - NewBridge has an extensive programme of exhibitions and events that explore contemporary art and the world around us. This might inspire your approach to The Collective Studio and help you write your application.

It's OK to not know everything now You might not have much idea what the future holds, and you might be struggling for direction. This is very normal. In fact, this is a good reason for applying to The Collective Studio! Within your application, we're not asking you to map out exactly what you hope to get out of the programme, but some ideas of the kinds of things you are thinking about, what you are interested in and how you can see yourself getting involved in all of this. The Collective Studio is about the process of developing so you don't need to have everything all worked out in advance (and it's also ok if you do! And if it changes along the way!). But explain and describe this to us in your application. For example – you might write "I'm

interested in collaboration, but I'm not sure what this will look like yet, but hope to explore this with other members of the Collective over the 11 months"

Space, events, community. The Collective Studio offers space, a programme of events, and the opportunity to be part of a supportive creative community. Make sure you mention all these different aspects of the programme, and why they are of interest to you. For example: don't just say "I want affordable space" and not mention all the other things the programme has to offer (and if this is the only bit you're interested in, then take a look at our studio membership instead!).

Guides for Bio/Statement Here's a very handy guide by Jiggle N Juice Collective to writing a Bio or statement. Remember, this doesn't need to be perfect, so don't worry if you're not 100% happy with it or if you've not written something like this before, but it helps to have one that we can improve as part of The Collective Studio programme!

<https://www.jigglejuicecollective.com/support/how-to-statements-and-bios>

Remember to Label things! Please remember to follow the application guidelines, naming all your files with Your_Name at the start of them – this means your application won't get mixed up with anyone else's and saves us lots of time too!

FAQs

What is the Collective Studio again? The Collective Studio is an eleven-month programme for people at the start of their artistic journey, and focusses on personal, creative, and professional development. The programme puts communal activity, learning from each other and inviting guests to lead activity and workshops at the forefront. The Collective Studio is run by the NewBridge Project in partnership with Newcastle University and their Institute for Creative Arts Practice.

What are the different types of membership? How do I know which type of membership to go for? There are a number of different types of membership, which provide options to suit different types of practice, budget and location. Here's a break-down of what they are: -

Memberships with space The Collective Studio has a dedicated space at our new building, the Shieldfield Centre. The space has a number of small spaces to be shared, and a lovely hot desk area with lots of natural light that can be used for working, socialising and hosting events. You can visit this space on our in person open day! The space has 24-hour access.

- Shared space – this gives you a 5m² space that you will share with another Collective Studio member, and is open on the the connecting corridor
- Hot desk membership – this gives you access to The Collective Studios dedicated hot desk area, as well as NewBridge's other co-work spaces
- Associate membership – Perfect for those based outside the North East but who want to join the Collective Studio / NewBridge community, and take part in the 11 month

programme of events and opportunities! You can attend events online, or come to Newcastle to attend (often we can offer bursary support towards travel).

If you are very keen to be on The Collective Studio, attend all the events and be part of the community, but are after a bigger or more private space, then do let us know in your application as we can sometimes accommodate this. However, we have recently moved to a new building at full capacity so it is unlikely on this occasion that we will have the right space for you.

By taking part in The Collective Studio, am I joining an 'art collective'? No, the 'Collective' element is about collective learning, collectively shaping a programme, and doing it together as a group. It doesn't mean you are forming an 'artist collective' by joining the programme (though you may join as a collective and may start working this way during or after the programme!). Collectivity in this context means leaving your own practice at the door, entering into communal, collaborative experiences and seeing what you can feed back into your individual practice after.

How is it different from being a regular NewBridge member? The Collective Studio is a time-bound programme of eleven months, with a fixed cohort of people, a focus on communal activity and is specifically for early-career creatives. Collective Studio events and opportunities aren't open to the public or other NewBridge members, they are just for that year's cohort. The structure for the eleven months is informed by what's worked for past cohorts, and the ideas for activities come from the current members, and all members are supported by NewBridge's Artist Development Programmer. However, you do automatically become a NewBridge member when you join The Collective Studio, which gives you access to Practice Makes Practice (a broader artist development programme for all NewBridge members, and open to the wider creative community through one-off ticket sales), and lets you apply for all member-only opportunities

How many people are on the cohort? This varies depending on circumstance. The first cohort had twenty people in a big, shared space. Since then, we've become more flexible and offered individual and shared smaller studios, associate memberships for people who live further away and co-work/hot-desk membership, with around 30- people on the most recent cohorts. We have recently moved to a new building, so spaces will be a bit different to those that were in Gateshead, and we expect there will be around 25 people on The Collective Studio this year across different types of membership.

My practice isn't typical art / I don't know what my practice is, is this for me? We'd like to reiterate that our definition of art is very, very broad and we are interested in all forms of creative expression. Not being able to pin-point your practice is fine - in fact flexibility, openness to change and a broadminded approach to art-making are encouraged. The Collective Studio sometimes helps people to (re)define what they are interested in, and sometimes opens-up new questions and possible avenues of exploration.

Are events real-life or online? In the past we've mainly done things in real life, but over the last year have run an entirely online programme. Our intention for the 2021-23 Collective Studio is to make sure that as many activities as possible are accessible both online and in real life.

Who Do You Work With? We have great relationships with many artists and creative practitioners in lots of different fields and disciplines, as well as other arts organisations who we work with to produce an exciting and varied programme as part of The Collective Studio and beyond. We make the most of the rich art scene of the North East, as well as connecting with national and international artists and organisations. Often, Collective Studio members mention the kind of thing they are interested in, and we invite someone suitable to lead an event or workshop on the subject.

What are the attendance requirements? We know that life can be unpredictable, but we've found that the more Collective Studio members get involved, the better their experience is. The monthly activity and 2-day intensives provide time and space to get to know each other, so aiming to attend all of these should be a minimum requirement. There is more informal peer-led activity in between the programmed activity, too. With The Collective Studio - you do get out what you put in! We know it's a bit of a cliché, but if you show up and get involved in activity, you'll have a richer experience and you'll make the collective stronger. We know life often throws up surprises and there might be things that you have to opt out of (and we like to foster a pressure-free environment) but the people who have got the most out of past Collective Studios tend to have been those that really threw themselves into it. So, if you think that using the studio/co-work space, attending events and activity (in real life and online) and getting involved in the collective experience is going to be a bit of a squeeze with other commitments, perhaps consider applying next time.

Do I have to be capitalistically productive? Absolutely not! The Collective Studio is a space for you to be as productive or as unproductive as you feel. Sometimes having permission not to indulge in the constant churn of making and doing is very welcome, and plenty of people get a lot out of taking part without necessarily producing anything. The ideas, sparks of imagination and friends you make will inform future you's practice in ways you don't know yet so the idea is to take the pressure off if that's what you require. Conversely, if you want deadlines, structure and impetus to make new work, that can be arranged, too!

What are the Benefits? People often find the best thing about The Collective Studio is the group of people involved - your fellow members of the cohort, and the supporting cast of NewBridge staff, members and invited guests. The relationships you foster and friends you make can help you bounce ideas around, work together on things, give encouragement, critique and support, and spark your imagination in new and unexpected ways. They often provide the support structure for your continued development beyond the 10 months, too. Not all the benefits of the Collective Studio are immediate. Some things will become apparent further down the line, after the 10-month programme has ended. There might be a collaboration that comes to fruition in 2034; someone you meet at a Collective Studio event writes about your work for Corridor8 in 18 months' time, or when you are thinking about studio space beyond the end of the programme, you might have a studio mate you wouldn't have met without the cohort. The immediate benefits are:

- A bespoke programme of events aimed at supporting the early-stages of your career and practice, and shaped by the group.
- Joining a community of like-minded folk at the same stage of their artistic journey.
- Opportunities for exhibiting and presenting work
- Affordable, 24-hour access studio / workspace within an active creative community
- Access to resources and workshops (such as dark room, ceramics studio, wood workshop, print studio).
- Discounted prices for bookable project space at NewBridge (for making, exhibiting, hosting).
- Access to other member-only events and opportunities (such as Practice makes Practice)
- 10% discount in NewBridge books

What isn't the Collective Studio? The Collective Studio isn't like school, college or university programmes - there's no fixed curriculum (apart from the given dates), modules, assessment or qualification at the end of the programme.

I just want a studio and am not as bothered about the programme of activity - is The Collective Studio for me? Probably not. The best thing about The Collective Studio is the collective activity we do together, the things we learn by doing stuff in a communal setting, the mix of people and the practices being shared. If you just want a studio that's fine - you can apply to be a studio member at NewBridge here: <https://thenewbridgeproject.com/become-a-member/>

I am interested in The Collective Studio, but not for this year, could I apply in the future? Absolutely. If you aren't sure if it's the right fit for you now, or you know you won't have a lot of time over the 11-month programme, then you can always apply next year! We usually release the annual call out in May or June.

Accessibility The Collective Studio space at the Shieldfield Centre is located on the second floor of the building, and activities and events may take place on other floors. All these areas of the building can be accessed via a lift, and there is an accessible toilet on each floor. There is a fire evac chair on the first and second floors, however, these need to be operated by 2 trained members of staff, which may affect the 24-hour access to your space should you be unable to evacuate the building in case of emergency without support. If you have any questions about this then do get in touch and we can discuss this further, and/or arrange a site visit with you.