



### Application Process

The Application Process is one of the most important steps in successful apprenticeships. Matching the right student and artist ensures that the creative process has a positive, significant impact on both parties. Several selection tactics can help facilitate the process toward a rewarding partnership. These activities are outlined below, with examples to guide artists and students in this preparatory stage. The Application Process includes four major areas:

- 1. Call for applications;**
- 2. Completion and review of applications;**
- 3. Interviews between artists and potential apprentices;**
- 4. Selection of candidates.**

It will take approximately two – two/half months, from notification to selection, to complete the Application Process. An estimated timeline for the process is as follows:

<b>Call for Applications</b>	<b>3-5 weeks</b>
<b>Application</b>	<b>3 weeks</b>
<b>Interviews</b>	<b>1-2 weeks</b>
<b>Selection</b>	<b>1-2 weeks</b>

### Call for Applications

To ensure that qualified applicants – both artists and students – are notified of the opportunity for apprenticeships, the call for applications cycle is very important. Ideally, a third party distributes a “call for applications” by posting fliers or notices at places frequented by both artists and students. Distributing an electronic message to arts organizations’ membership roster or via college list service is also a great way to reach potential applicants.

Specific steps include the following:

- Announcements to all major information networks (such as craft guilds, community centers, local/state arts organizations, etc.)
- Description/Profile of the Apprenticeship, including but not limited to:
  - Minimum qualifications for participants (students and artists)
  - Compensation
  - Length of apprenticeship
  - Key benefits (for artist, student)
- Contact (either an individual, website or organization) to provide additional information, answer questions, distribute applications
- Deadline for applications



Allow at least three to five weeks for the notification cycle. Depending on the time of year that the apprenticeship is offered, the sponsoring organization may need to start six months prior to the program (for example, announce in January for a June apprenticeship program). This advance notice allows ample time for potential applicants to complete the required documentation, receive additional information about the proposed apprenticeships, and concisely understand the responsibilities and expectations of both parties for a successful apprenticeship experience.

An alternative to a detailed announcement directing potential participants to an application office or website is to have an **orientation meeting**. This initial notice invites interested individuals to attend a gathering at a specific place on a particular day and time to learn more about the upcoming apprenticeship program. This format allows attendees to ask questions and find out more about the actual learning opportunity.

Tips for the notification process:

- Create a list of frequently asked questions, and answers, to keep communication consistent
- Offer testimonials from other artists and students that have engaged in positive apprenticeships to provide first-person information about the experience
- Make copies of application available for students and artists to take away, if desired, or direct them to a website where applications can be downloaded
- Identify a point of reference – website, call center, individual or office – to handle any follow-up questions

## Applications

Central to the process is a **written application**. Capturing specific information from both artists and students is vital for review and selection. While the basics – name, address, telephone, e-mail address – is important, so is the creative and educational experience of the applicant. Both artists and students need to share:

- What skills and unique attributes they bring to the apprenticeship
- Why they want the learning experience – their purpose for involvement, commitment
- What they expect out of the apprenticeship (key deliverables, specific outcomes)

Applications are also important documents to obtain from artists interested in hosting an apprenticeship. The applications can help determine the viability of the artist to teach and provide the necessary skill sets to apprentices, identify the work environment for students, and articulate the intent of the artist... to pass on learned traditions, to mentor budding artists, to expand their capacity for production, etc. For the artist, an understanding of the time commitment required to fulfill the expectations is essential.

For the student, a realistic expectation about the learning curve is important. An articulated purpose and end result by both groups will help minimize disappointments and maximize opportunity to match the right artist with student. Sample applications for both student and artist are included for reference. Once the application deadline has passed, schedule a review session to carefully assess each application to determine the most suitable candidates for participation.



### Identifying the right person

There are several ways to determine the best candidate. At minimum, the artist should **check references** to learn about work habits, creative skills and temperament. Ideally, the artist will interview the top potential candidates personally to review their portfolio and discuss specific expectations about the apprenticeship. If appropriate, the artist can offer a **tour of the workplace** to make sure the environment and opportunity is right for both parties. This recommended activity allow both parties the opportunity share information. As the individuals will work closely together, it is vital that the applicant and artist have mutual goals and creative desires as well as complementary personalities.

A personal interview (see below) may be required to accurately assess the most appropriate candidates. Otherwise, the artist and student should meet to create a contract outlining their respective roles and performance expectations. (See Section E: Contracts)

### Interviews

Personal interviews provide artists an opportunity to assess the skills and work ethic of potential students. It is advised that the interview include a mix of open-ended questions and hands-on skills test to make informed decisions about the appropriateness of the student for the individual artist. In addition to the conversation about the individual and their desires/expectations for the apprenticeship, the artist can use the time to learn more about the student's capabilities. Three key areas should be addressed during the personal interview:

1. Skills, dexterity (see below)
2. Work ethic
  - a. Preferred learning style: to be given one project and carry it through to completion or enjoy working on a lot of different projects at the same time
  - b. Productivity: work extra hours (late, weekends) to accomplish the task on deadline; prefer a set or flexible schedule; evaluation by accomplishment or by the time
3. Creativity
  - a. Philosophy: describe
  - b. Preferred medium (if defined)

Sample Open-ended Interview Questions include:

- In the past, how have you balanced work, school and personal commitments?
- How do you define yourself creatively?
- What aspects of being an artist are you most interested in learning more about?
- What do you want to have learned at the completion of the apprenticeship?
- Why are you interested in apprenticing with me?
- What do you consider your greatest strengths (or best qualifications)?
- What creative or work-related areas do you consider need improvement?



- If applicable, describe the best experience you had at a previous job.
- If applicable, what did you like least about a recent job?

Tests can be conducted during the interview period to assess dexterity. Ask applicants to:

- Sew a design on a patch of cloth
- Mold a block of clay into an object
- Paint a picture
- Solve a wood puzzle

Evaluation sheets must be provided for each interviewee to capture responses and record observations. If dexterity tests are offered, create a grading system to assess how well the student performed. This evaluation step is vital to ensure that students are fairly graded on performance and work potential, complementing their written application.

### Selection

The Application allows artists the opportunity to review candidates' credentials and interests. Each artist should create a criteria sheet for the qualifications and expectations of the top candidates.

Qualifying the right student for you ...

- Do you want a student that has previous work experience or is a total novice?
- Do you want the student to be a self-starter or someone that will work closely with you on projects?
- Do you want a student to work outside your studio or on premises?
- Do you want a full-time student or part-time worker?
- Will the student work similar to a co-op, full-time for a quarter/semester and then in school for the next term?
- Do you want a student that aspires to be a professional artist/craftsperson or an individual that is a) hobbyist, b) studio/technical support, c) desire to work in the art/craft industry but not creative enough (or have the initiative, risk orientation) to be full-time, professional artist?

#### Evaluation Criteria: Sample Grading System

A. Education	10 points
B. Previous Work Experience	20 points
C. Work Experience in Craft Industry	20 points
D. Good Communication Skills	10 points
E. Personality/Professionalism	10 points
E. Creative talent, dexterity	20 points
F. Willingness to learn	10 points
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100 points</b>

Once the application and interview process is completed, the artists and organizers should be able to make appropriate selections. The next step is to create a contract between the parties to ensure each group meets apprenticeship expectations.