

1st Year Checklist - Explore

Welcome to RISD! Your Foundation Year is a time to build essential skills, explore new mediums, and start discovering the paths you may want to pursue. Use this roadmap as a guide to make the most of your first year and begin laying the groundwork for a fulfilling creative career. The RISD Career Center is here to help you succeed!

Fall: Start Building Your Career Foundation

Access Your ArtWorks Account

Log into your account on [ArtWorks](#), RISD's platform for jobs, internships, freelance, and artist opportunities. You will also use ArtWorks to schedule Career Center [advising appointments](#), and stay updated on career events and workshops. It's important to stay connected and aware of resources throughout the year.

Get to Know Career Center Resources

Take time to familiarize yourself with the valuable resources at the [Career Center](#) website - internships, jobs, career preparation, artist resources, residencies, grants, business, and entrepreneurship information. Learning about these resources early can expand your creative options throughout your studies.

Attend Fall Career Center Programs

Try to attend at least one career program each semester. Most are one hour long and pack a lot of super helpful information for your career development in each session. Starting now will significantly build your knowledge and clarify your choices as you move through your RISD education. You'll receive career program emails and can also find programs in [ArtWorks](#), on our [Events](#) page, and on Involved.

Explore Potential Majors

Begin thinking about what you might want to study. Attend department open houses and studios, speak with your Academic Advisor, talk with upperclass peers, and reflect on which classes or projects have interested you the most. You'll declare your [major](#) in the spring, so start gathering information to make an informed choice.

Follow the Career Center on Social Media

Stay updated on career events, job and internship opportunities, and tips by following us on [Instagram](#) & [Facebook](#)! It's an easy way to stay connected with the Career Center and make the most of our resources.

Winter: Take Time to Experiment, Expand, & Plan

Visit the Career Center

Make an [appointment](#) with the Career Center for career advising and to learn about our services, resources, programs, and events. You don't need to have any materials or topics to discuss. Just meet with us! Getting connected early can help you set career goals and make the most of valuable resources.

Build Your Community

This is a great time to connect with other students to learn about various majors. You can also begin reaching out to RISD alumni through [LinkedIn](#) to discover potential career paths and start building your professional network. Career Center advisors can help guide you in this process. Also explore [Involved@RISD](#) to learn about campus events, join clubs, and participate in workshops.

Attend Wintersession Career Center Programs

Wintersession is a terrific time to take part in Career Center programs. There are lots of workshops to prepare you with essential skills and career knowledge. You'll receive Career Center program emails and can also find programs on Involved and our [Events](#) page like the popular Resume Critique Workshop and the Career Resources for First Year Students Program.

Explore Opportunities to Expand Your Interests

Use Wintersession to explore your interests or take classes to learn new techniques, develop digital tools, or try something different that can help you grow creatively and professionally.

Spring: Develop Your Portfolio and Define Your Interests

Connect with Peers, Faculty and Academic Advisors

Continue engaging with your classmates, instructors, and academic advisors as you build relationships at RISD. They can provide support, feedback, academic guidance, and collaborative opportunities as you progress through your here.

Gather Work for Your Portfolio

Begin compiling images of your best projects from your courses. Don't worry about having enough for a career path at this time. Having an organized collection of strong pieces will help you see your growth and prepare for future internships, opportunities, and summer work applications. Also begin documenting your work with a focus on strong digital images that can benefit future applications for internships, jobs, freelance, grants, and residencies.

Get Comfortable with Digital Tools

Even if your work is mostly hands-on, it can be helpful to learn some basic digital

image editing techniques. RISD's [LinkedIn Learning](#) gives you access to this resource, so you can start experimenting and see how digital skills might support or expand your practice regardless of your major.

Attend Spring Career Center Programs

Spring offers even more valuable career programs that can also prepare you for summer opportunities. You'll receive Career Center program emails and can also find programs on Involved and our [Events](#) page.

Summer: Gain Experience and Reflect on Your Goals

Explore Summer Learning Opportunities

Summer is a great time to grow your skills and try something new. Look for opportunities, open studios, artist talks, online tutorials, and community events that spark your curiosity. Ask about job shadowing to understand fields of interest. You can also use the time to dive deeper into personal projects, collaborate with friends, volunteer with local arts organizations, or explore new techniques and materials. These experiences can expand your practice, build your portfolio, and connect you with others in the arts community.

Start Sharing Your Work

Continue documenting your work from your first year at RISD. If it feels right, start sharing your portfolio through platforms like Instagram, Behance, or even a personal website. Find portfolio platforms, tips, and resources at our [Portfolio/Demo Reel Page](#). You might share your process and what you care about in your work to begin shaping your creative voice in a public space.

Create a LinkedIn Profile & Begin Networking

Establish a professional online presence by creating your [LinkedIn](#) profile or refine one you have. Begin using it to connect to classmates, alumni, and industry professionals. Use it to share your accomplishments and projects you're proud of. As you connect to people, ask them about their career paths, creative interests, day-to-day work and more. Don't worry about their level or status; LinkedIn is all about making connections. The Career Center can help guide you through this process, explain how to use LinkedIn, demonstrate why it's a valuable resource, and provide feedback on your profile.

Reflect and Set Goals for Your Second Year

Before diving into your second year, pause to reflect on what you've made and learned so far. What excited you? What challenged you? Try to get these down in writing, keep a journal, list, or database. Setting a few goals - like trying a new medium or exploring a career path - can help you move into the next year with intention and curiosity.