

## 2nd Year Check List - Create

**Congratulations on entering your 2nd year at RISD!** Now that you've chosen your major, it's time to focus on honing your skills, developing your portfolio, and exploring potential career paths. Use this roadmap to stay on track and make the most of your 2nd year at RISD.

### Fall: Deepen Skills and Build Your Professional Foundation

- ☐ **Develop Skills & Critical Thinking in Your Major**

Now that foundation year is behind you, you'll be diving into the tools, techniques, and critical thinking that are part of your major. This is a great time to get comfortable in your discipline, try new things, and figure out what feels like you in your work.

- ☐ **Access and Update Your ArtWorks Account**

If you haven't done so, log into your [ArtWorks](#) account and update your profile. This platform will help you stay connected to job postings, internships, career events, and workshops hosted by the Career Center along with scheduling career advising appointments.

- ☐ **Make a Career Advising Appointment**

Schedule a one-on-one advising [appointment](#) with the Career Center even if you're just curious about your next career steps or where to begin. No worries about having an agenda for the appointment. We're here to support you with developing your resume, exploring career paths, finding internships, gaining portfolio feedback, searching for artists opportunities, and more. Getting to know what's available now can make things easier down the road.

- ☐ **Start a Portfolio**

Begin compiling your best work in a [portfolio](#) or building upon a portfolio you've already made. This can be a PDF portfolio, a personal website, or a page on a platform like Behance. Having your work organized helps you track your growth and makes sharing your art easier when opportunities come up. Now is a good time to look at examples of alumni and professional portfolios to help structure yours and understand industry expectations.

- ☐ **Attend Career Center Programs & Events**

Look for career workshops, panels, and networking events related to your interests and field. These can give you insight into professional expectations, networking skills, and potential career paths. Try to attend at least two Career Center programs each semester. You'll receive career program emails and can also

find programs in [ArtWorks](#), on our [Events](#) page, and on Involved. [Internship Connect](#) takes place every Fall and is a terrific event to learn about internships and make professional connections.

☐ **Build Business Knowledge Through the Art of Business Series**

[Art of Business](#) is a great way to gain business knowledge and skills during your time at RISD. It takes place every year and across the semesters. Learn how alumni have started businesses and educate yourself about contracts, marketing, pricing, taxes, business entities, freelancing, and more.

## Winter: Take Time to Experiment, Expand, & Plan

☐ **Consider Taking an Internship or Course**

Wintersession is an optional opportunity to gain hands-on experience through a short-term internship or a course related to your field of study or even outside your studies. If taking an internship for credit, be sure to check with your department as some provide credit starting the junior year. If you don't participate in Wintersession, this can provide time to search for summer opportunities, network with professionals, and build your career materials.

☐ **Create or Refine Your LinkedIn Profile**

Establish a professional online presence by creating or refining your [LinkedIn](#) profile. Use it to connect with alumni, classmates, and industry professionals, and to share accomplishments or projects you're proud of. 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.

☐ **Refine Your Networking Skills**

Wintersession is a perfect time to practice [networking](#) in low-stakes environments. This is about building relationships and connecting with people who have similar interests to you. Connect with peers, attend events, and try to reach out to 3-5 alumni in your field on [LinkedIn](#). Ask them about their creative interests, career paths from RISD, day-to-day work, and potential opportunities in their fields. Don't worry about their level or status; LinkedIn is all about making connections.

☐ **Start Preparing for Summer Opportunities**

If you're planning to secure a summer opportunity, whether it's an [internship](#), assistantship, summer job, or on-campus experiences, you can begin researching and applying during Wintersession. You can find opportunities through [ArtWorks](#) and other resources on our [Internships & Jobs](#) page. Some may have early deadlines, so it's helpful to polish and tailor your resume and portfolio to the opportunity, and apply early. The Career Center can work with you on all of these.

☐ **Research Managed Grants & Internship Support Opportunities**

You can find an array of [RISD Managed Grants](#) and internship support opportunities on these pages of our site. Many are available to sophomores and juniors and have deadlines in winter and spring. Begin researching them now for consideration this summer and future years.

☐ **Practice Interviewing**

Consider a mock [interview](#) with the Career Center to get comfortable talking about yourself, your work, skills, and goals. Practice describing your creative process and explaining the choices behind key pieces in your portfolio.

## Spring: Launch into Your Professional Development

☐ **Consider Applying for Summer Internships & Artist Opportunities**

If you feel ready, put your research and preparation into action by applying to summer [internships](#) and creative opportunities. Be sure to have a strong application package ready, including your tailored [resume](#), [cover letters](#), and [portfolio](#). If you're an international student, it's important to meet with [ISSA](#) and to confirm the requirements for [CPT - Curricular Practical Training](#) - if you plan on doing an internship in the U.S.

☐ **Continue to Develop Your Portfolio**

Add new work from your classes and personal projects to your portfolio. Aim to create a well-rounded collection that showcases both technical skills and your creative vision. If you haven't yet, consider setting up a [personal website](#) or portfolio page. Think about the story you want to tell about your artwork and personal interests.

☐ **Seek Feedback on Your Art & Design Work**

Take advantage of critique opportunities about your portfolio, whether with faculty, classmates, or industry professionals. Constructive feedback will help you see your work from new perspectives and refine it to professional standards.

☐ **Consider Student Employment & Other Opportunities for Your Resume**

Your campus job is already building skills you can carry into your creative career. Translate your job tasks into resume language that stands out and connect other work to creative industry skills and needs. Our Career Advisors can help you with this.

☐ **Engage in Student Organizations and Department Activities**

Use [Involved@RISD](#) to participate in clubs, student organizations, or department events. These can help you build leadership skills, create connections, and add depth to your resume.

☐ **Visit the Career Center for Advising & Resources**

Make an [advising appointment](#) to support you through the opportunities you're seeking and to further explore your interests and career goals.

## Summer: Professional Experience and Reflect

- ☐ **Pursue an Internship, Artist Opportunity, Independent Project, or Summer Job**  
Whether it's an internship, artist opportunity, or a self-directed project, use your summer to gain practical experience. Document your work and accomplishments throughout the summer and bring a notebook to use during the duration of the experience. These opportunities will enhance your resume and portfolio.
- ☐ **Expand Your Online Portfolio**  
Update your [portfolio](#) or website with new work, including any pieces from your summer experience. Include process shots or documentation of completed projects to demonstrate your range and versatility.
- ☐ **Reflect and Set Goals for Your Third Year**  
Take time to look back on your experiences so far. What projects or moments have been most rewarding? Where have you felt yourself grow, and where do you want to push further? Setting a few goals—like refining your portfolio or exploring new approaches—can help you enter your third year with clarity, focus, and creative momentum.
- ☐ **Get Comfortable with Digital Tools**  
Even if your work is mostly hands-on, it can be helpful to learn or deepen your digital tools like the Adobe Creative Suite. 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.