



Employability guidebook

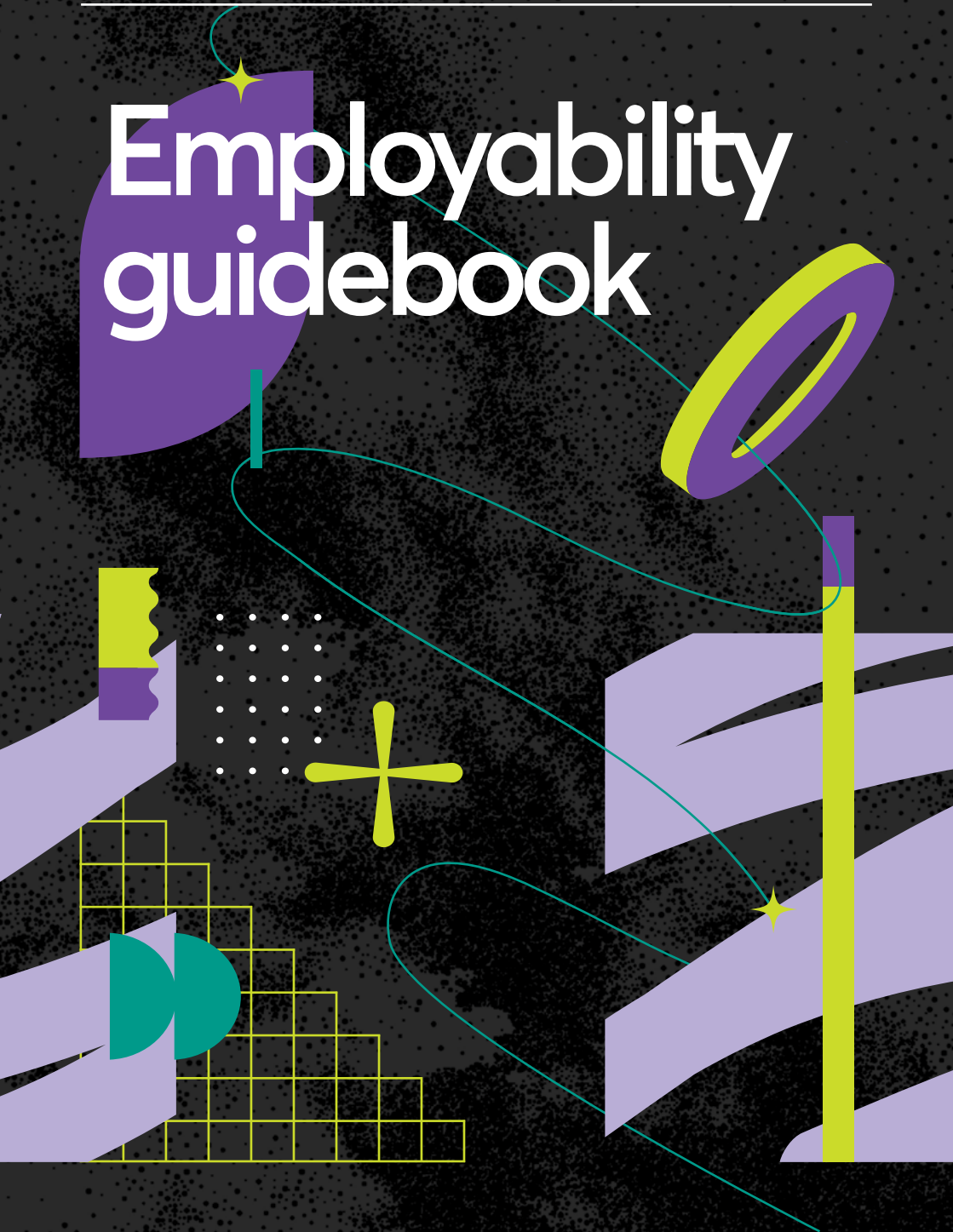


Table Of Contents

CHAPTER 1 10

First Steps in Career Development and Choices.....	14
Self-Assessment Exercises	16
Exploring Career Paths.....	22
Your Cover Letter – Tell Your Story.....	26
Portfolio Building: Showcasing Your Best Work	29
Professional Opportunities After Graduation.....	32
Freelance or Self-Employment.....	36
Choosing Higher Education	37
Exchange and Studying Abroad	41
Additional Paths and Opportunities	43
Networking: Building Connections in the Creative Industry	46
Internships: Gaining Valuable Experience	50

CHAPTER 2 52

First Steps in Work Rights and Responsibilities	56
Working Legally in Another EU Country	64
Paying Taxes Matters	65
Types of Employment Forms	72
Latvia Ways to Start a Career in the Creative Industries in Latvia	72
Czech Republic Main Differences Between Being Self-Employed (OSVČ) and an Employee in the Czech Republic ..	82
Get Ready for a Job Interview	88
Employment Contract.....	91

Essential Things to Remember as a Freelancer	101
Dealing with Disputes and Legal Issues	111
Empowerment Through Knowledge	116

CHAPTER 3 118

First Steps in Entrepreneurship	122
From Idea to Business	126
Visualizing Your Idea	128
Useful links:	131
Legal and Financial Foundations.....	134
Business Forms – Explained Simply	135
Licenses and Permits.....	139
Planning Your Finances	142
Tools for Budgeting and Accounting	144
Pricing	146
Branding and Marketing for Young Creative Entrepreneurs	157
Sales and Customer Relationships	166
Scaling and Growth	171
Useful Resources	177

CHAPTER 4 180

Sebastian Hols	184
Sarmīte Poļakova	186
Laima Jurča	188
Milan Pekař	190
Richard Vodička	192
Marie Absolonová	194
AI Tools for Creative Careers	198



Co-funded by
the European Union



SUPŠ:UH

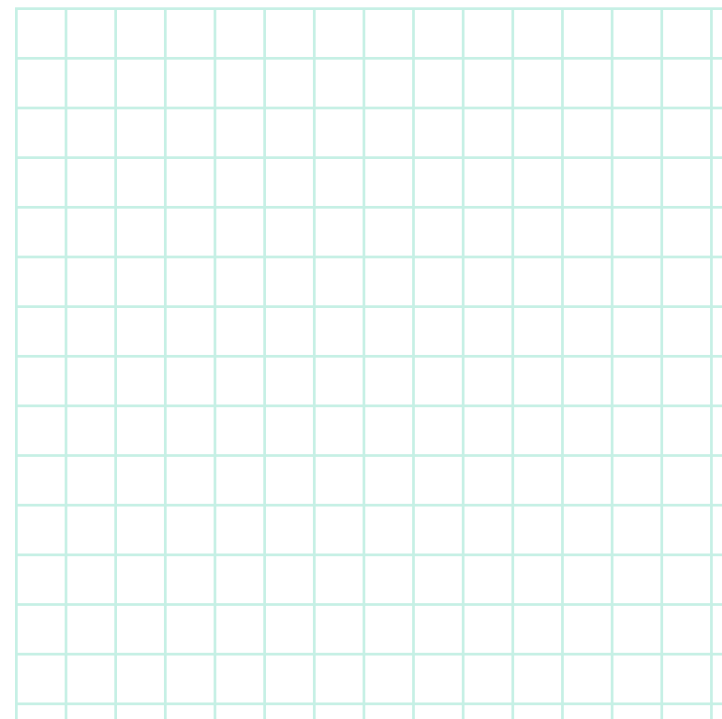


Materials created within
Erasmus+ Small-scale partnership
project "EmpowerED: Fostering
Employability, Cultural
Understanding, and Digital
Resilience in VET Education"
No 2023-2-LV01-KA210-
VET-000178458 Implemented
from 1.04.2024. till 31.03.2026.
by coordinator MIKC "Liepājas
Mūzikas, mākslas un dizaina
vidusskola" (Latvia) and project
partner Střední umělecko
průmyslová škola Uherské Hradiště
(Czech Republic), total project
budget is 60 000 euro.



Introduction to the Guidebook

Starting a career can feel
overwhelming, but this guidebook
is here to help! It is designed to give
you the knowledge and tools you
need to make smart career choices,
understand different job options, and
even start your own business. The
guide is divided into four chapters,
each focusing on a different stage of
your career journey. Regardless which
path you choose, this guidebook is
here to support you on your journey
into the world of work!



01 Chapter 1

Figuring Out Your Career Path

The first chapter helps you in exploring different career options – getting a job, becoming self-employed, or continuing your education. You will also learn what is important when starting out in creative industries, like building connections, making a portfolio, and presenting yourself professionally. Additionally, there are simple self-assessment tools to help you understand your strengths and plan your future.

02 Chapter 2

Understanding Work and Your Rights

Once you start working, it is significant to know your rights and responsibilities. This chapter explains job opportunities, potential risks, and provides useful tips to succeed. It also covers important legal aspects – what it means to work as an employee versus being self-employed – so you can confidently step into the job market.

03 Chapter 3

Becoming Your Own Boss

If you dream of running your own business, this chapter is for you! It walks you through how to create and sell your products or ideas, the legal side of starting a business, and how marketing and sales can help you grow. You will also master tips on how to keep your business successful over time.

04 Chapter 4

Inspiration

The journey into a creative career is not only about skills and planning – it is also about passion, perspective, and continuous inspiration.

In this chapter, you will meet six inspiring professionals from Latvia and the Czech Republic who have built meaningful careers in art, design, and creative entrepreneurship. Their stories offer real-life insights into how creative people shape their paths, overcome challenges, and remain true to their values.

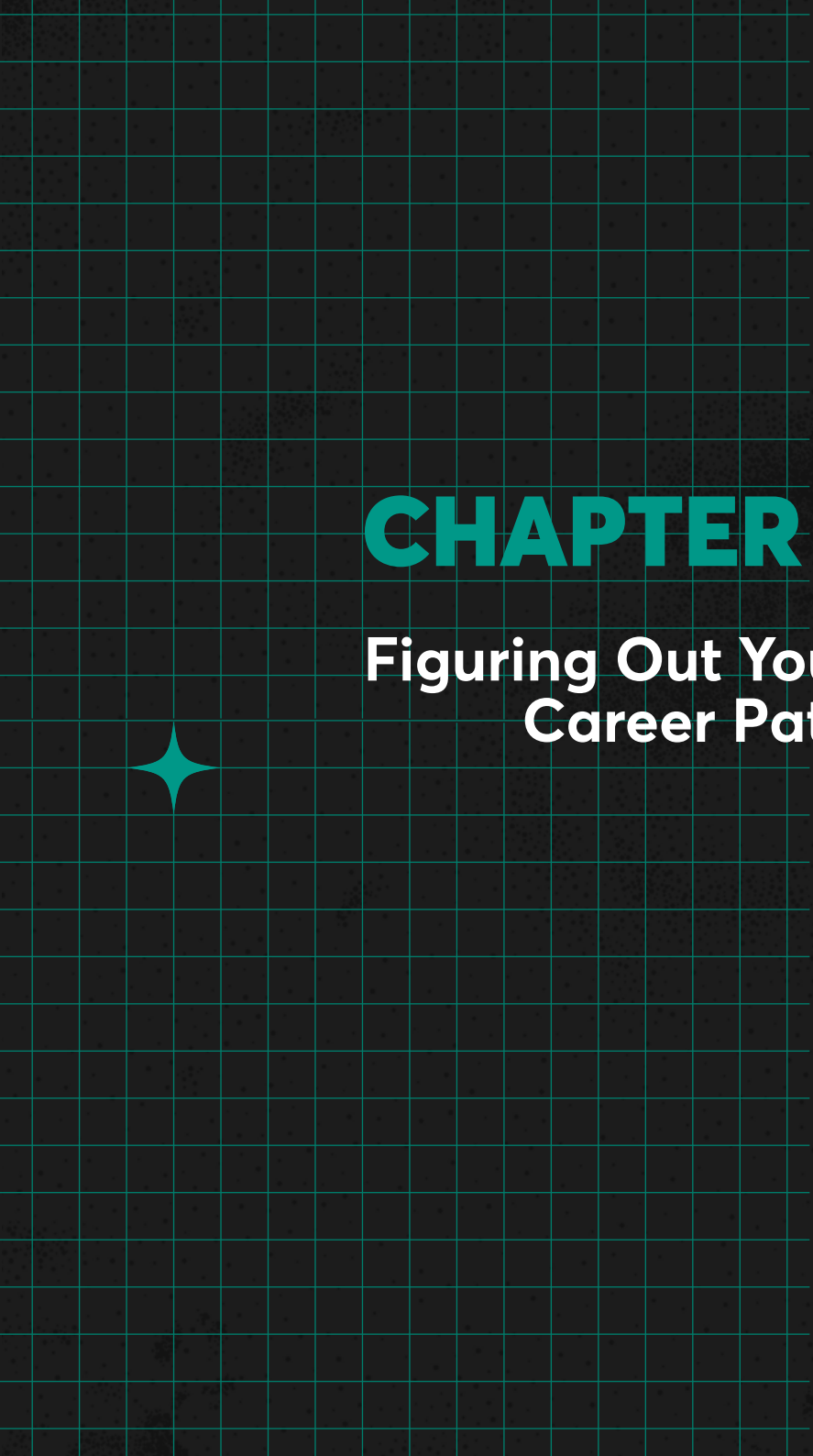


The English version of this guidebook contains content and comparisons from both Latvia and the Czech Republic, providing an international perspective for readers.



**"The best way
to predict
the future is
to **create it.**"**

Peter Drucker



CHAPTER 1

Figuring Out Your Career Path





**"Do what you can,
with what you have,
where you are."**

Theodore Roosevelt

First Steps in Career Development and Choices

Introduction

Welcome to your career development guide, specially designed for students and graduates of secondary vocational schools in creative industries. This chapter will help you navigate the exciting journey of defining your artistic identity, exploring career paths, and building the skills needed to succeed in creative industries. Use this guide as a roadmap for taking practical steps towards a fulfilling career.

Discovering Your Artistic Identity

Your career journey starts with understanding who you are as a creative professional. Here are some exercises to help you reflect on your skills, interests, and values.

Q: Why is it important to explore your personality and interests when deciding on your future career?

A: Exploring your personality and interests helps you find a career path that genuinely fits you. This is especially valuable for art students, as it leads to more satisfying and inspiring work. Here's how:

1. Alignment with Personal Strengths

Understanding your personality helps you identify your natural strengths, such as creativity, problem-solving, communication, or technical skills.

2. Sustained Motivation and Fulfilment

A career aligned with your passions and interests is more likely to keep you motivated in the long term. When you enjoy your work, you feel more fulfilled and are less likely to experience burnout, which is particularly important in artistic professions where inspiration and passion are the key factors.

3. Tailored Career Pathways

Different personalities thrive in different environments. For example, introverts might excel in roles that involve deep focus, like painting or graphic design, while extroverts might shine in collaborative settings, such as fashion shows, multimedia production, or art direction.

4. Navigating Challenges

Being aware of your tendencies can help you prepare for challenges. For instance, if you know you prefer structure and planning, you might thrive in roles with clear guidelines. If you are more experimental, careers with room for creative freedom might suit you better.

5. Maximizing Creativity

Personality exploration can also help you understand how you work best creatively. Are you a big-picture thinker, or do you love fine details? Do you enjoy working alone, or does collaboration inspire you?

6. Career Satisfaction and Longevity

Careers in the arts often require dedication and resilience. When your career aligns with your personality, you are more likely to stay committed and find long-term satisfaction, even in the face of challenges like competitive markets or financial instability.

7. Building a Unique Professional Identity

Your personality and inclinations shape your artistic voice and style. By understanding these traits, you can carve out a unique niche in your chosen field, distinguishing yourself from others.

Self-Assessment Exercises

List your technical and creative skills

Exercise 1: Personal Inventory

Skills: List the technical and creative skills you have developed (e.g., drawing, digital illustration, photography, 3D modeling, branding).

Interests: Reflect on what excites you about the creative process. Do you enjoy working with digital tools, hands-on materials, or experimenting with mixed media?

Values: Identify the values that are important to you in your work (e.g., creativity, innovation, social impact, sustainability).



Exercise 2: Identifying Strengths and Areas for Growth

What are your artistic strengths? Do you excel at conceptual thinking, detailed execution, or communication?

What areas would you like to improve? Could it be a technical skill, like learning a new software, or a soft skill, like managing client relationships?

Exercise 3: Your Artistic Style or Work Preferences Questionnaire

What themes, mediums, or techniques are you drawn to in your work?

How would you describe your aesthetic or the message you aim to communicate through your art or design?



Understanding Your Strengths and Passions

To make informed career choices, it is essential to reflect on both your **artistic interests** and **personality traits**. This two-step approach will help you identify your strengths, passions, and the career paths that best align with your individuality.

1. Reflect on Your Artistic Interests

Artistic interests shape your creative identity and help you identify the areas where you feel most passionate and inspired. Use the following prompts to guide your reflection:

What themes or concepts excite you the most? (e.g., creativity, sustainability, innovation)

Which mediums or tools do you enjoy working with the most? (e.g., digital tools, traditional materials, or mixed media)

What type of projects or roles feel most fulfilling to you? (e.g., collaborative, solo, or community-based)

2. Explore Your Personality Traits

Understanding your personality traits can provide clarity on the type of work environments and roles where you will thrive. Many free online tools can help you explore your inclinations:

Emiero Personality Test: Discover your strengths and career inclinations.

Take the Test (In English) <https://www.emiero.com/test/>

NIID.lv Career Tests: Explore career options and test your preferences through Latvian-specific tools.

Visit NIID.lv (In Latvian) <https://www.niid.lv/>

16 Personalities Test: Based on the MBTI (Myers-Briggs Type Indicator for personality) framework, this test helps identify your personality type and suitable careers.

Take the Test (In English) <https://www.16personalities.com/>

Truity Career Personality Profiler: A comprehensive tool that matches your personality traits to potential career paths.

Start the Profiler <https://www.truity.com/test/career-personality-profiler-test>

123test Career Aptitude Test: This free test helps identify careers and skills that align with your job personality.

Try It Here <https://www.123test.com/career-test/>

Career Explorer Career Test: An in-depth assessment that provides personalized career recommendations based on your interests and traits.

Explore Now <https://www.careerexplorer.com/career-test/>

Practical Steps

- **Complete Multiple Tests:** Comparing results across platforms can give you a more well-rounded understanding of your personality and career inclinations.
- **Reflect on the Results:** Look for patterns in the recommendations and insights from the tests.
- **Combine Insights:** Use what you have learned about your personality and artistic interests to create a clearer picture of your ideal career path.

Useful site with list of professions and needed skills for them
(Adapted for European Union) – The ESCO Classification

<https://esco.ec.europa.eu/en/classification>



Exploring Career Paths

Graduating from a vocational secondary school is just the beginning of your professional journey. Whether you are entering the workforce or pursuing freelance opportunities, finding your first role in the creative industry requires a mix of strategy, persistence, and networking. This section provides practical steps and insights to help you secure your first job or project.

Before diving into the details of a job or client interview, it is essential to have the right materials in place. **The two most important documents you will need are your CV and your cover letter.** These documents are crucial in helping you make a strong impression.

Your CV – Your First Impression

Your CV is the first thing an employer or client will see, so it needs to make a strong impact. Even if you are starting with little professional experience, there are still ways to demonstrate that you are a great candidate.

It is completely normal — and even expected — to adjust your CV and cover letter for each job or opportunity you apply for.

Your CV should include the following sections:

- **At the top**, include your **full name, phone number, email address, and location** (just your city or region). Keep this section **clear** and **easy to find**.
- **Objective or Profile:** This short paragraph (2-3 sentences) should explain **who you are** and **what kind of job position you are** aiming for. For example, "I am a creative and motivated recent graduate seeking for a role where I can contribute my design skills and passion for art while continuing to grow professionally."
- Since this is most likely your first job, your **education** is important. **List your school**, any relevant **courses**, and any **projects** or **exhibitions** that show off your skills. Include all **certifications** and additional training that apply to the position. Do not forget your **driving license** if you have one.
- Include any **work experience, internships, or volunteer roles**. Even if they are not related to the job you are applying for directly, they show responsibility and teamwork. If you lack professional experience, focus on **school projects** or **extracurricular activities**.
- If you speak more than one **language**, make sure to mention it. Language skills can set you apart from other candidates. State the level according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).
<https://europa.eu/european-union/common-european-framework-reference-language-skills>
- Next, **list all skills that** may be relevant **for the job, whether** they come from school projects, hobbies, or volunteer work. These can include communication, problem-solving, technical and digital skills such as Photoshop, design software, or social media management.
- If you have any **references** from teachers, mentors, or previous supervisors, include them – but this is not always necessary.

- **CV Tip:** Your CV should be **one page**. Employers often do not have time to read long documents, so focus on the most important information and keep it concise.

If you do not know how to format your CV, the Europass platform for creating your CV is available here –

<https://europass.europa.eu/en/create-europass-cv>



Your Cover Letter – Tell Your Story



Your **cover letter** is your opportunity to introduce yourself and explain why you are the right fit for the job. It should feel more personal than your CV and give the employer a sense of your enthusiasm for the position. To approach this effectively, follow these steps:

- Begin by explaining why you are writing and mention the job or project you are applying for. Indicate where you found the opportunity. For example: "I am excited to apply for the Graphic Design Assistant role at [Company], which I discovered on your website."
- Next, share why you want to work for this company or client. Discuss what you admire about them and how your values align. Researching the company helps you stand out and shows genuine interest in the role.
- Then, highlight what you can offer. Talk about your skills, education, and any relevant experience that makes you a good fit for the position. Focus on your strengths and how you can contribute to the company's success. For instance, "My recent work on a branding project for my school's art exhibition gave me hands-on experience with design principles and taught me how to meet tight deadlines."

Dear [Hiring Manager's Name],
I am excited to apply for the [Position Name] role at
[Company], which I found on [where you found it].

✗ Start your letter by stating the position you're applying
for and how you discovered it.

I admire [Company]'s work in [specific detail], and I feel that my
interests and values, especially in [your area], closely align with your
mission.

✗ Mention something specific about the company to show genuine
interest.
My background in [your education or experience] and recent project
on [brief example] have helped me develop skills in [skills relevant to
the job]. I believe I can contribute positively to your team.

✗ Briefly highlight relevant strengths and achievements.
I would love the opportunity to discuss how I can support
your goals. Thank you for considering my application.

✗ End with a polite and enthusiastic closing statement.

Sincerely,
[Your Name]

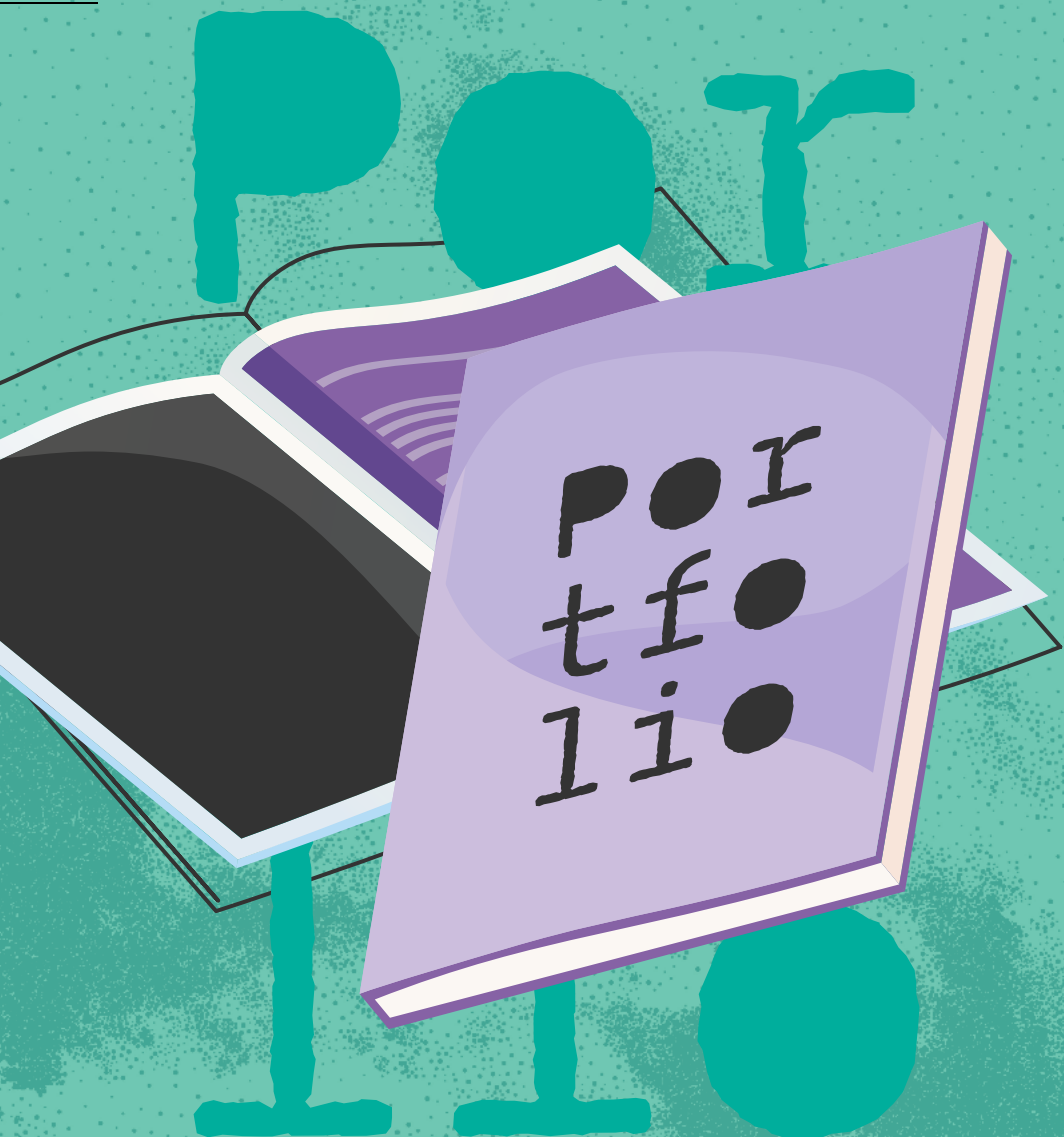


- Finally, end your cover letter with a positive closing statement. Express your enthusiasm for the opportunity and your eagerness for an interview. You could say: "I would love the chance to discuss how my skills and enthusiasm can contribute to your team. Thank you for your time and consideration."
- **Cover Letter Tip:** Keep your cover letter to **one page**, just like your CV. It should be clear, concise, and professional, but do not be afraid to let your personality shine through.

If you are not confident in your abilities to write a cover letter, you can take inspiration from the Europass platform here – <https://europass.europa.eu/en/create-europass-cover-letter>

General Tips for Both CV and Cover Letter

- Even if this is your first job, show that you are eager to learn and grow. Employers want to see that you are motivated and ready to take on new challenges. By preparing a strong **CV** and **cover letter**, you will be ready to impress any employer or client. These documents will help you stand out and take one step closer to securing your first job.
- Make your CV and cover letter unique for each job or client. Focus on the skills and experiences that are most relevant to a particular job position.
- **Never exaggerate your skills or experiences. Be authentic and show what you can actually do.**
- **Always check** your documents for spelling and grammar mistakes. A well-written CV and cover letter show that you care about the details.



Portfolio Building: Showcasing Your Best Work

- Before you start, make sure you understand who your portfolio is meant for.
- Your portfolio is your most powerful tool for demonstrating your skills. Make sure it is professional, tailored, and visually appealing.
- Select high-quality examples (audio, video, etc.) of your work and tailor them to your target audience.
- The sequence of the included works is important because it influences the viewer's impression, the flow of perception, and the structure of the narrative.
- Create a digital portfolio using platforms like Behance, Canva or Adobe Portfolio.
- Include process work to showcase your creative journey and problem-solving abilities.

How to Build a Strong Portfolio?

Select Your Best Work: Quality over quantity. Choose a variety of projects that demonstrate your technical ability and creative thinking.

Tailor Your Portfolio: If you are applying for a specific job or project, customize your portfolio to highlight relevant work.

Show Your Process: Include sketches, mood boards, and drafts to show how you develop ideas and solve creative problems.



Digital vs. Physical Portfolio

Digital Portfolio: Create a website or digital portfolio using platforms like Behance, Canva or Adobe Portfolio. Make sure it is mobile-friendly and easy to navigate.

Physical Portfolio: For certain roles, a printed portfolio may still be relevant. Ensure it is well presented, with high-quality prints and clear labelling.

Use examples of best practice

When crafting your portfolio, it is essential to understand what makes a design portfolio truly impressive.

Check here for some useful examples – *35 Graphic Design Portfolio Examples | Shillington Education* <https://www.shillingtoneducation.com/blog/35-best-graphic-design-portfolio-examples>

"Shillington Education" offers inspiration and guidance by showcasing exceptional portfolios from designers worldwide. Here you will find:

- **Diverse and Unique Work:** Each portfolio highlights a range of projects that demonstrate creativity, technical skills, and versatility.
- **Clear Presentation:** The designs are displayed in clean and professional formats, ensuring the work takes center stage.
- **Personal Branding:** Many designers include elements of personal branding, such as unique logos, consistent color schemes, and engaging introductions.
- **Showcasing the Process:** These portfolios often include sketches, drafts, or mockups to provide insights into the creative process.

Use this resource as a benchmark to refine your own portfolio, ensuring it reflects your personality, skills, and potential as a designer. Visit the article for examples that inspire and help you elevate your work to professional standards.





Professional Opportunities After Graduation

Starting Employment

Searching for a job in the creative industry involves using modern tools and a proactive approach.

If you are looking for a job, internship, or freelance work, there are several platforms that can help you connect with potential employers. Whether you are searching for part-time student jobs, full-time employment, or industry-specific opportunities, these job portals are great places to start.

Top Job Portals in Latvia

- **Teirdarbs.lv** <https://teirdarbs.lv/> – A popular job portal offering a wide range of job opportunities across different industries. Suitable for both students and professionals looking for full-time positions.
- **NVA Job Portal** <https://cvvp.nva.gov.lv/#/pub/vakances/saraksts> – The official job vacancy portal of the **State Employment Agency (NVA)**. Provides government-supported job offers and career guidance, including internship opportunities.
- **CV Market** <https://www.cvmarket.lv/> – One of Latvia's largest job search websites with a user-friendly interface that allows you to filter jobs by industry, location, and experience level.
- **CV.lv** <https://www.cv.lv/lv> – A well-established job portal in Latvia offering various job opportunities, including positions for **students, graduates, and part-time workers**.
- **Visidarbi.lv** <https://www.visidarbi.lv/> – A job search platform that gathers vacancies from multiple sources in one place, making it easier to find a job that matches your skills and interests.



In the Czech Republic,

there are several great websites where students and graduates can find

job opportunities. Here are some of the best ones:

- **Jobs.cz** www.jobs.cz – One of the largest job portals in the Czech Republic, offering a wide range of job opportunities in various fields.
- **Prace.cz** www.prace.cz – Another popular portal with many jobs offers, including positions for students and graduates.
- **Profesia.cz** www.profesia.cz – This portal not only offers job listings but also provides information about companies, which is helpful for students and graduates searching for employment.
- **Fajn-brigady.cz** <https://www.fajn-brigady.cz/> – A specialized portal for students and young people, focusing on job offers suitable for them.
- **Volnamista.cz** <https://www.volnamista.cz/> – A platform with job offers in the Czech Republic. It allows easy filtering by job type (internships, part-time, full-time).
- **Jooble** <https://cz.jooble.org/> – A well-used platform to find a job of any kind in the Czech Republic.
- **Work in EU** https://european-union.europa.eu/live-work-study_cs – Platform where you can find internships and job positions in EU and how to apply.



International Online Platforms and Job Boards

- **Creative-Specific Platforms:** Websites like Behance, Dribbble, ArtStation, and Design Jobs Board are tailored to creative professionals. These platforms not only host job postings but also allow you to showcase your work to potential employers.
- **Freelancing Platforms:** Platforms like Fiverr, Upwork, and Freelancer are excellent for securing freelance projects and building your client base.
- **LinkedIn:** Use LinkedIn to connect with employers, join relevant professional groups, and showcase your portfolio. Regularly engage with posts and job listings in your field. Although LinkedIn is not specifically for students, many companies post job opportunities for fresh graduates and internships here. It is also a good place to build your professional profile.

Search Beyond Job Boards

- **Company Websites:** Do not hesitate to explore the career sections of the websites of companies or organizations you admire, even if no job openings are listed. **Proactively sending your CV** and portfolio can make a strong impression, as some companies may hire internally without publicly advertising vacancies.
- **Official Government Websites:** For secure opportunities, check job postings on official national or municipal websites, especially for roles in the public sector or cultural organizations.
- **Social Media Caution:** While platforms like Facebook may host job listings, be cautious. Verify the legitimacy of opportunities by checking the employer's official website or contacting them directly.

Activating Your Personal and Professional Network

- Many creative professionals find opportunities through their networks. Let your connections know you are searching for work and share your CV and portfolio. Even if there is no immediate opportunity, staying visible can lead to referrals or recommendations later.

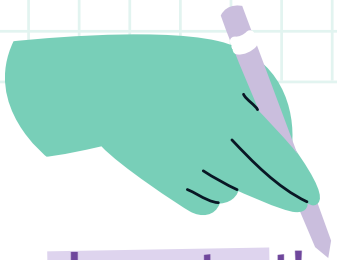


Freelance or Self-Employment



Many graduates choose freelancing or self-employment because it gives them **flexibility** to work on different projects, set their own schedules, and be their own boss. However, being a freelancer also means taking full responsibility for finding clients, managing deadlines, and handling finances.

It can be a **great career path** if you are organized, motivated, and ready to market yourself. Freelancing allows you to **build a strong portfolio, gain experience, and grow your reputation in the industry.**



Important!

Freelancers must register their business and pay taxes like any other professional. For details on how to register as self-employed and handle taxes, check Chapter 2. Also, in the next chapter, you will learn more about the nuances of employment relationships, employment contracts, and other legal issues.

Choosing Higher Education



If you wish to deepen your knowledge and skills, consider higher education programs in creative industries.

Universities and Colleges in Latvia

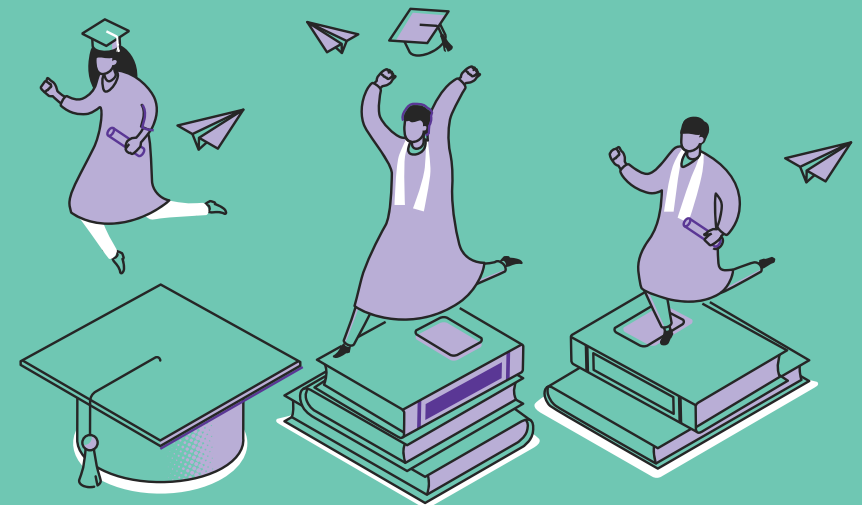
Latvia has both public and private universities offering bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees in various fields, including arts, design, sciences, business, and technology.

- **Check Admission Requirements**

Most universities require students to have completed secondary education and passed the centralized exams (CEs). Some creative and technical programs may require entrance exams, portfolios, or interviews.

- **Find a university**

Use platforms like *NIID.LV | Nacionālā izglītības iespēju datubāze* (National database of educational opportunities, which summarizes the educational opportunities offered by educational institutions in Latvia). Or you can check accredited universities in Latvia here *E-platforma - Augstākās izglītības kvalitātes aģentūra* <https://eplatforma.aika.lv/>



Top Universities for Arts, Design, and Creative Studies

- **Latvian Academy of Arts** (Latvijas Mākslas akadēmija)
Programs: e.g. Visual Arts, Graphic Design, Interior Design, Painting, Fashion Design
Website: www.lma.lv
- **Jazeps Vitols Latvian Academy of Music** (Jāzepa Vītola Latvijas Mūzikas akadēmija)
Programs: e.g. Music Performance, Composition, Music Education, Conducting
Website: www.julma.lv
- **Latvian Academy of Culture** (Latvijas Kultūras akadēmija)
Programs: e.g. Theatre, Audiovisual Arts, Cultural Management, Dance Choreography
Website: www.lka.edu.lv
- **Riga Technical University** (Rīgas Tehniskā universitāte)
Programs: e.g. Product Design, Digital Design, Industrial Design Engineering
Website: www.rtu.lv
- **Riga Stradins University** (Rīgas Stradiņa universitāte)
Programs: e.g. Multimedia Communication, Digital Media Production
Website: www.rsu.lv
- **Latvian Culture College** (Latvijas Kultūras koledža)
Programs: e.g. Stage Design, Cultural Event Management, Media Production
Website: www.kulturaskoledza.lv



Educational Opportunities for Secondary School Graduates in the Czech Republic

Universities and Colleges

Higher education institutions in the Czech Republic offer bachelor's, master's, and doctoral programs across a wide range of disciplines, from humanities and sciences to technical and artistic fields. Both public and private universities are available.

- **Admission Requirements:** Typically, students must pass the **"maturita" examination**, which serves as a school-leaving and university entrance exam. Each university may have additional entrance requirements.
- **Find a University:** A list of Czech universities, including admission details, can be found here: <https://www.vysokeskoly.cz/>

Creative and Artistic Schools in the Czech Republic

- **Higher Vocational School of Arts and Secondary School of Arts, Prague** (Vyšší odborná škola uměleckoprůmyslová a Střední uměleckoprůmyslová škola Praha)
Programs: e.g. Design of Game Objects, Interior Design, Painting, and more.
Website: www.sups.cz
- **Michael Academy – Higher Vocational School of Advertising and Artistic Creation** (Akademie Michael – Vyšší odborná škola reklamní a umělecké tvorby)
Programs: e.g. Film Production, Photography, Graphic Design, Advertising Creation.
Website: www.akademiemichael.cz
- **Secondary School of Arts and Design and Higher Vocational School, Brno** (Střední škola umění a designu a Vyšší odborná škola Brno)
Programs: e.g. Restoration, Fashion Design, and other art-related fields.
Website: www.ssudbrno.cz

- **Zlín Private Higher Vocational School of Arts** (Zlínská soukromá vyšší odborná škola umění)
Programs: e.g. Fine Arts and Dramatic Arts.
Website: www.skolaumeni.cz
- **Higher Vocational School of Graphic Arts and Secondary Industrial School of Graphic Arts, Prague** (Vyšší odborná škola grafická a Střední průmyslová škola grafická Praha)
Programs: e.g. Graphic Design, Printing Technology, and related disciplines.
Website: www.hellichouka.cz
- **Prague City University – School of Art, Design & Media** (Prague City University – Škola umění, designu a médií)
Programs: e.g. Foundation Diploma in Art, Design & Media Practice; Bachelor's degrees in Creative Media Production, Fine Art Experimental Media, Graphic Design; Master's degrees in Fine Art, Future Design.
Website: www.praguecityuniversity.cz/schools/art-design-media
- **Academy of Arts, Architecture and Design in Prague** (UMPRUM) (Vysoká škola uměleckoprůmyslová v Praze)
Programs: e.g. Bachelor's degrees in Design (e.g., Industrial Design, Furniture and Interior Design), Fine Arts, Graphics and Visual Communication.
Website: www.umprum.cz

Conservatories in Czech Republic

For students interested in music, dance, and theater, conservatories offer specialized long-term programs (typically 6 to 8 years). These programs often begin at the lower secondary level but are also open to upper secondary graduates.

- **Duncan Centre Conservatory** (Konzervatoř Duncan Centre)
Focus: Contemporary Dance
Website: www.duncancentre.cz
- **Jan Deyl Conservatory of Music and Secondary School** (Konzervatoř Jana Deyla a střední škola)
Programs: e.g. Keyboard Instruments (piano, organ, accordion, harpsichord), String Instruments (violin, viola, cello, double bass, guitar), Woodwind Instruments (flute, oboe, clarinet, saxophone), Brass Instruments (trumpet, trombone, tuba), Percussion Instruments, Composition, Classical and Popular Singing, Piano Tuning. Website: www.jandeylconservatory.cz
- **Pilsen Conservatory** (Konzervatoř Plzeň)
Programs: Various music disciplines.
Website: www.konzervatorplzen.cz

Exchange and Studying Abroad

Studying abroad is a great opportunity for students to gain international experience, improve skills, and build global networks. Many programs offer scholarships, grants, financial aid, and exchange opportunities to help students study, intern, or conduct research in another country.

- **Erasmus+ and European solidarity corps** – The most popular programs for students who want to study, intern, or volunteer in European countries.
More information: https://youth.europa.eu/_en; <https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/>
- **CEEPUS (Central European Exchange Program for University Studies)** – A regional exchange program that supports student and teacher mobility between Central European countries. Ideal for those studying in technical, social, or humanities fields. More information: <https://www.ceepus.info/>
- **European University Alliances** – Many universities participate in EU university networks, allowing students to take courses across multiple European universities. Check with your school's international office for available options.
- **DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service)** – Offers scholarships for bachelor's, master's, and PhD students who want to study in Germany.
More information: <https://www.daad.de/en/>
- **Fulbright Program (USA)** – Provides scholarships for master's degrees, PhD research, and professional exchanges in the United States. Open to students in all fields, including arts, business, and science.
More information: <https://www.fulbrightprogram.org/>
- **Study in the UK** – students can apply for undergraduate and postgraduate programs in the UK. Although tuition fees have changed since Brexit, students can apply for scholarships or loans through individual universities.
Search for funding options: <https://study-uk.britishcouncil.org/>

- **Campus France** – Provides scholarships and funding opportunities for students wishing to study in France. Programs are available in arts, engineering, business, and more. More information: <https://www.campusfrance.org/en>
- **Study in Holland (Nuffic)** – The Netherlands offers English-taught programs with scholarships for international students. More information: <https://www.studyinholland.nl/>
- **Norwegian and Nordic Study Grants** – Nordic countries provide tuition-free or low-cost education for EU students. Check Norwegian, Swedish, Danish, and Finnish universities for study options. More information: <https://www.studyinnorway.no/>
- **Erasmus Mundus Joint Master's Degrees** – A prestigious program that allows students to study in multiple countries while completing a joint master's degree. Full scholarships are available for high-achieving students. More information: <https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/opportunities/opportunities-for-individuals/students/erasmus-mundus-joint-masters>
- **Study in Canada Scholarships** – Offers scholarships and funding options for students interested in higher education in Canada. More information: <https://www.educanada.ca/>
- **Japanese Government (MEXT) Scholarships** – Provides full funding for bachelor's, master's, and research programs in Japan. More information: <https://www.studyinjapan.go.jp/en/>

How to Find Study Abroad Opportunities?

- **Look for support from organizations that help students study abroad**, such as Kalba.lv for example in **Latvia** <https://www.kalba.lv/lu/studijas-arzemes/> or <https://education.cz/> in the **Czech Republic**, or even **foreign embassies**.
- **Plan ahead** – Many programs have **early application deadlines**. Start preparing at least **6-12 months in advance**.
- Studying abroad gives you **valuable experience, a global perspective, and better career opportunities**. Explore your options, apply for scholarships, and take your education to an international level.

Additional Paths and Opportunities



Project-Based Work or Collaborations

- **Project Management and Implementation:** Participate in creative projects or collaborate with local organizations that promote art and design development.
- **Co-Working Spaces and Art Studios:** Consider renting a studio or joining a co-working space to connect with other creatives.

Continuous Education and Courses

Learning does not stop after graduation. Whether you are an artist, designer, musician, or entrepreneur, continuing to improve your skills is the key to remaining competitive in the creative industry.

Attend Masterclasses and Workshops

- **Learn from Industry Experts** – Professionals with real-world experience share insights, techniques, and career advice that you will not find in textbooks.
- **Meet People and Build Your Network** – Masterclasses are a great way to connect with professionals, mentors, and potential collaborators in your field. The people you meet could lead to new job opportunities, partnerships, or future projects.
- **Stay Updated on Industry Trends** – The creative industry is always evolving. Attending live sessions, panel discussions, and expert talks keeps you informed about the latest trends, tools, and market demands.
- **Get Inspired and Challenge Yourself** – Seeing how professionals work can spark new ideas and help you push your creative boundaries.
- **Practice and Receive Feedback** – Unlike online courses, in-person masterclasses often provide direct feedback from professionals, helping you improve faster.

Expand Your Skill Set Anytime Online

If attending in-person classes is not possible, there are many online learning platforms where you can develop new skills at your own pace. Best Online Learning Platforms for Creatives:

- **Coursera** <https://www.coursera.org/> – University-level courses in graphic design, marketing, business, and more.
- **Domestika** <https://www.domestika.org/> – Creative courses on illustration, photography, animation, branding, and digital design.
- **Skillshare** <https://www.skillshare.com/> – Short and practical courses on creative business, music production, visual arts, and freelancing.

Find the Best Workshops and Masterclasses

- **Check Your School and Local Institutions** – Many art, design, and music schools organize free or discounted workshops for students and alumni.
- **Follow Cultural Centers and Industry Events** – Museums, galleries, and music venues often hold educational events with industry leaders.
- **Check residencies in Latvia and worldwide** – It offers artists and designers the opportunity to live and work in a different place temporarily, outside their usual environment. The purpose of the residency is to foster creative work, the development of new ideas, collaboration with other artists or the community, as well as cultural exchange
- **Look for Professional Associations** – Organizations like AKKA/LAA (Latvia), OSA (Czech Republic), and European Creatives Networks offer educational programs and networking opportunities.
- **Attend Creative Festivals and Conferences** – Events like design biennales, music expos, and film festivals often feature masterclasses where you can learn directly from top professionals.

Invest in Your Growth

Whether you choose an in-person masterclass or an online course, investing in continuous learning helps you:

- **Gain confidence in your abilities**
- **Keep up with new industry tools and trends**
- **Expand your professional network**
- **Increase your chances of finding better jobs or freelance opportunities**

Tip: Many creative professionals **attend masterclasses even after years of experience** to keep improving and networking. **The more you learn, the more opportunities you will create** for yourself!

Remember to also attend masterclasses **offered at your school**, as they are free of charge. You may have to pay a lot of money for them later!

Importance of Planning and Flexibility

Successfully completing your centralized exams is crucial for expanding your options after graduation. By aligning your exam subjects with your career interests, you will have a strong foundation for pursuing technical or creative professions. However, even if your plans change, your exam results ensure broad opportunities to explore and succeed in other fields.

Pay Attention!

Your career path is as unique as your creative vision. Whether you choose employment, freelancing, or further education, it is essential to pursue a direction that aligns with your interests, skills, and goals. And remember – the world is changing, and you must be able to adapt to the surrounding circumstances and keep up with current trends in the industry as well in order to achieve true success!

Networking: Building Connections in the Creative Industry

Networking is one of the most powerful tools for professional growth in creative industries. For students and graduates of vocational art and design schools, it provides an opportunity to connect with like-minded individuals, gain exposure to potential employers, and discover collaborative projects. Building a strong network not only helps in finding job opportunities but also fosters inspiration, learning, and support throughout your creative career.

Why Networking Matters?

- **Access to Opportunities:** Many creative roles are filled through personal connections and recommendations rather than formal job postings.
- **Collaboration and Learning:** Networking allows you to learn from others, share ideas, and collaborate on innovative projects.
- **Industry Insights:** Through conversations with professionals, you can gain a deeper understanding of trends, expectations, and challenges in your field.
- **Mentorship:** Establishing connections with experienced professionals can provide guidance and support as you navigate your career.
- **Building Collaborative Connections:** all professional and social events are a valuable way to connect with like-minded individuals, share experiences, and foster collaborations. For students and graduates, these informal gatherings or organized events offer a platform for exchanging ideas, learning from peers, and even initiating joint projects.



Where to Network?

In-Person Networking Opportunities

- **Industry Events:** Attend exhibitions, design fairs, concerts, and festivals. These gatherings are ideal for meeting professionals and showcasing your interest in the field.
- **Workshops and Seminars:** Participate in events organized by your school, local art studios, or cultural institutions to meet peers and mentors.
- **Competitions:** Engage in art and design competitions which often attract industry leaders as judges or attendees.
- **Internships and Apprenticeships:** Build connections with colleagues, mentors, and clients during internships or on-the-job training.



Online Networking Platforms

- **Professional Portfolios:** Platforms like Behance, Dribbble, and ArtStation allow you to showcase your work to a global audience. Remember that the relevance and popularity of websites change over time, so keep an eye on where the current process is currently taking place.
- **Social media:** Instagram, LinkedIn, and Pinterest are excellent for sharing your creative journey, connecting with professionals, and joining creative communities.
- **Specialized Forums:** Join forums and discussion groups dedicated to your field, such as Reddit communities or Discord servers for artists and designers.
- **Freelance Platforms:** Sites like Fiverr and Upwork not only help you find work but also connect you with potential collaborators and clients.

How to Network Effectively?

Preparing to Network

- **Develop a Strong Introduction:** Be ready to introduce yourself with a short, compelling summary of who you are, what you do, and what you are passionate about.

You can use the Elevator Pitch method. An elevator pitch is brief (think 30 seconds!) way of introducing yourself, getting across a key point or two, and making a connection with someone. It is called an elevator pitch because it takes roughly the amount of time you would spend riding an elevator with someone. Here you can learn more – https://careerdevelopment.princeton.edu/sites/g/files/toruqf1041/files/media/elevator_pitch.pdf

- **Create a Professional Portfolio:** Whether digital or physical, your portfolio should be ready to share at a moment's notice.
- **Set Goals:** Decide what you want to achieve through networking. Are you looking for a job, seeking mentorship, or exploring collaboration opportunities?

Building Relationships

- **Start Locally:** Connect with classmates, teachers, and local artists. Attend your school organized events and alumni meet-ups.
- **Be Genuine and Curious:** Show interest in other people's work and ask thoughtful questions. Avoid solely focusing on what they can offer you.
- **Follow Up:** After meeting someone, send a thank-you message or connect on LinkedIn. Maintain regular but professional contact.

Expanding Your Reach

- **Collaborate:** Work on joint projects with peers or professionals to build strong working relationships.
- **Share Your Work:** Post your work regularly on social media and portfolio sites to keep your network updated.
- **Seek Mentors:** Look for experienced professionals who can guide your career and help you navigate challenges.

Networking Tips for Students and Recent Graduates

How to start?

- **Start Early:** Begin building your network while still in school. Your classmates and teachers are valuable connections.
- **Attend School Events:** Your school hosts exhibitions, performances, and other events that connect students with industry professionals.
- **Volunteer:** Offer your skills to local cultural events or organizations to meet people in your field.
- **Use Technology:** Utilize QR codes in your portfolio or business cards to make it easy for others to connect with you online.

Overcoming Networking Challenges

- **Shyness or Introversion:** Start with smaller, more comfortable events or online platforms to build your confidence gradually.
- **Lack of Experience:** Focus on showcasing your enthusiasm and willingness to learn. Professionals often value passion and potential.
- **Follow-Up Anxiety:** Create a simple follow-up routine, such as sending a LinkedIn request with a short message after meeting someone.

Practical Example: Networking at an Event

- **Before the Event:** Research the event and the people likely to attend. Prepare questions and talking points relevant to the theme of the event.
- **During the Event:** Approach individuals or groups, introduce yourself confidently, and show interest in their work. Share your contact information or portfolio link.
- **After the Event:** Follow up within a few days, referencing your conversation. Express gratitude and interest in staying connected.

Long-Term Benefits of Networking

Investing in your network early will yield long-term benefits, such as:

- **Consistent Job Leads:** A strong network ensures you are informed of job openings and freelance opportunities.
- **Skill Development:** Learning from peers and mentors helps you grow your expertise.
- **Community Support:** A reliable network provides encouragement and advice, especially during challenging times in your career.

Networking is not just about finding opportunities; it is about building relationships that inspire and support you throughout your career. Begin networking while at school, leverage the school's resources, and engage with the creative community locally and online actively. With consistent effort, your network will become one of your most valuable assets in the creative industry.

Internships: Gaining Valuable Experience

Internships offer hands-on experience and are an excellent way to build your skills and network. Treat internships as learning opportunities to explore different roles in the creative field.

Useful recourse – National database of Internships of Latvia

- Prakse – <https://www.prakse.lv/>

Useful information about internships in Czech Republic:

- Internship Czech Design: <https://www.czechdesign.cz/stazisticky-program>
- National Museum Internships: <https://www.nm.cz/pro-badatele/odborna-cinnost/staze-a-praxe>
- VET internships: <https://mk.gov.cz/odborne-staze>

Internships: Gaining Valuable Experience

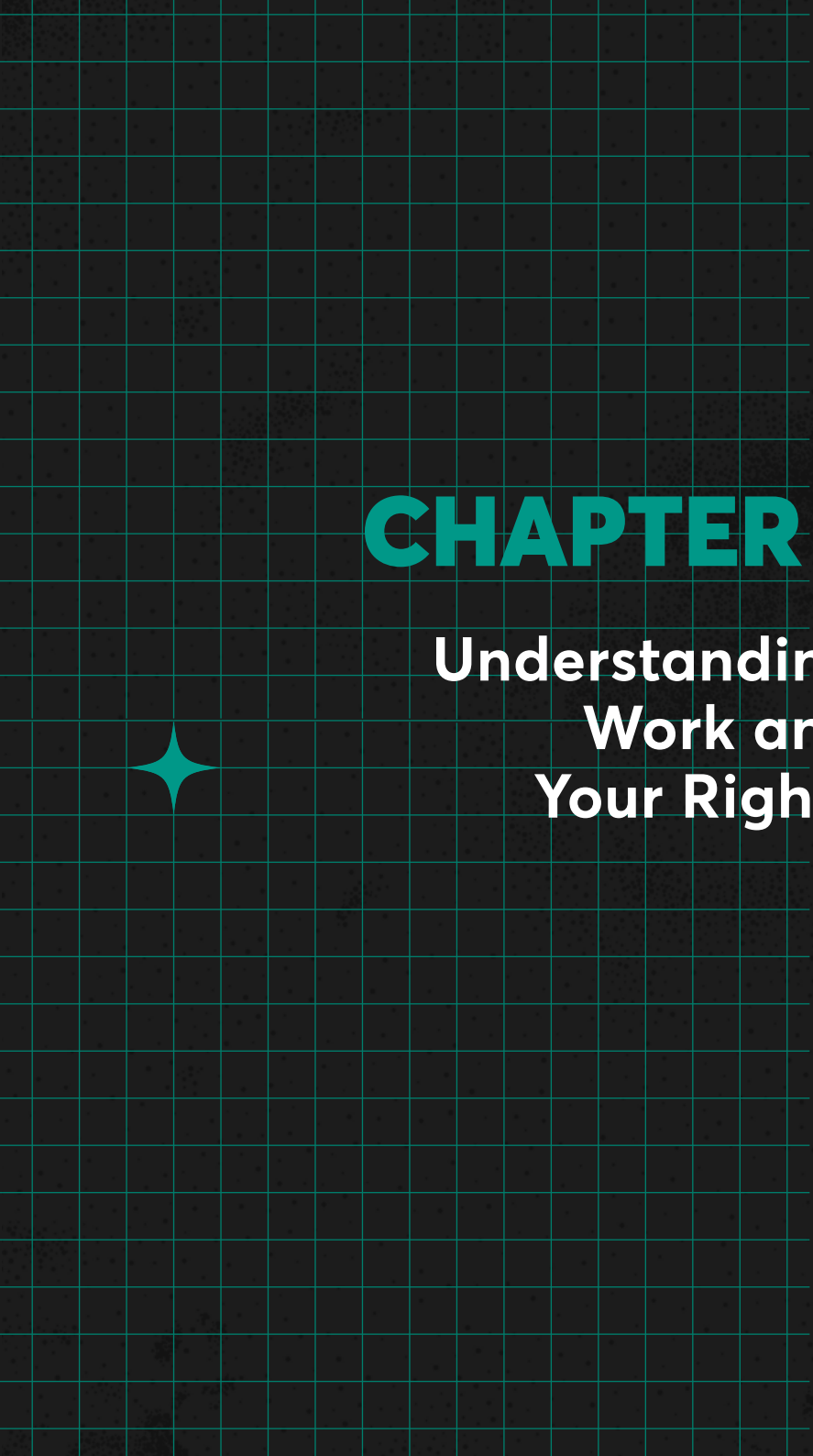
Internships provide hands-on experience and can be a stepping stone to a full-time role. Here are tips for finding and making the most of internships!

- **Search for Internships:** Look for opportunities on job boards or reach out directly to design studios, galleries, or agencies.
- **Maximizing Your Internship:** Treat your internship as a learning opportunity. Take on as many tasks as possible, ask for feedback, and network with colleagues.

Professional internship time is not a vacation, it is a great time to get to know real working conditions, the labor market situation, and test yourself. Use this time wisely!

Remember that during your internship, you are also creating an impression of yourself as a future professional. A bad reputation acquired early can hinder the fulfillment of your future dreams! Also, arrange all the documentation related to the internship – contracts, internship evaluation documents, and others, if necessary. The employee responsible for the internship will know more about this.

Remember, your career in the creative industries is the journey of exploration and growth. Stay curious, take advantage of the resources available to you, and build connections with peers and mentors. With persistence and passion, you can achieve your professional goals and make a meaningful impact in the creative world.



CHAPTER 2

Understanding Work and Your Rights





**„Opportunities
don't happen. You
create them.“**

Chris Grosser

First Steps in Work Rights and Responsibilities

Empowering Your Work Journey

Starting a career in the creative industry is exciting, but it also comes with important responsibilities. Understanding your work rights and the legal side of employment helps protect you from unfair situations and supports smart decision-making. Whether you work for a company or yourself, this knowledge will give you the confidence to manage your career.

Now that you know your career goals, it is time to learn how the world of work actually works. This chapter explains your rights and responsibilities, how to understand contracts, and how to handle work situations.

By the end, you will feel ready to step into the job market, protect yourself, and make smart career choices, whether you are an employee or a freelancer.

The Legal Landscape of Work

When starting your career as an artist or designer, it is essential to understand the rules that protect you at work. In Latvia, in the Czech Republic, and across the EU, there are laws that ensure fair contracts, wages, and working conditions. These laws exist to make sure that employers treat workers fairly, whether they are full-time employees, freelancers, or interns.



Here are some key things to keep in mind:

- **Contracts** – Always have a written agreement which explains your duties, pay, and rights. This protects you from unfair situations.
- **Wages** – Each country has a minimum wage, but creative jobs can have different pay structures. Make sure you understand how you will be paid.
- **Working conditions** – Laws ensure fair work hours, breaks, and protection against discrimination or unsafe environments.
- **Internships matter** – An internship can be your first real work experience and an important step into the industry (just like we discussed in Chapter 1). It helps you gain skills, build connections, and develop your portfolio. Even if internships are unpaid, they can be valuable for your career, but make sure they follow fair work conditions.

Employment Contracts

Whether you're starting a job as an employee or a freelancer, it's important to understand your rights and responsibilities. Most employment rules in Latvia and the Czech Republic are similar, but there are some key differences. In this section, you'll find general information that applies to both countries, as well as country-specific details at the end.

Employment contracts must be in written form and clearly outline job duties, salary, working hours, and the start date. Both the employer and the employee should receive a copy of the signed contract.

Probation periods work similarly in both countries. Employers can include a probation period to assess whether the employee is a good fit for the job. During this time, either side can end the contract without a specific reason. The probation period usually lasts up to 3 months, though it can be longer for certain positions.

While both countries follow the same general approach, the Czech system sometimes allows more flexibility, depending on the job type and company policy.



Working Hours and Breaks

The **standard workweek is 40 hours**, typically spread over five 8-hour days. Both countries also guarantee regular breaks to ensure worker well-being.

Breaks are handled similarly in both countries. Employees working more than 6 hours a day are entitled to at least a 30-minute break. This break is usually unpaid and can be split into shorter periods if agreed upon.

Overtime rules are also quite similar. In both countries, overtime must be compensated, either through additional pay or time off. However, the exact overtime arrangements can vary depending on the job type and industry standards.

Wages and Overtime

Workers are entitled to a **minimum wage**, which is set by the government and updated regularly. While the exact amounts differ, the system works similarly in both countries.

Overtime pay is also required by law in both countries. If you work beyond your regular hours, you must be paid extra or offered time off in compensation.



Latvia

- **Minimum Wage (2025):** €740/month.
- **Overtime Pay:** 100% extra per hour.
- **Overtime Limits:**
 - Overtime must follow an **8 extra hours per week** average.
 - The reference period cannot exceed **4 months**.
- **More details:** www.lm.gov.lv/lv



Czech Republic

- **Minimum Wage (2025):** CZK 20,800/month (or CZK 124.40/hour for a 40 - hour workweek).
- **Overtime Pay:** At least **25% extra** per hour, or compensatory time off if agreed.
- **Overtime Limits:**
 - Employers can require up to **150 hours per year**.
 - More overtime needs approval of employee but cannot exceed **8 extra hours per week** on average over **26 weeks**.
 - **The total max is 416 hours per year.**
- **More details:** <https://portal.gov.cz/>





Social Insurance and Taxes

In both countries, employees and freelancers **must pay social insurance and taxes**. These payments cover:

- Health insurance,
- Pension contributions,
- Unemployment benefits.

For employees, the employer automatically deducts taxes and social insurance from the salary.

For freelancers, both in Latvia and the Czech Republic, self-payment is required, based on income.

Health Insurance and Sick Leave

Workers have access to health insurance and paid sick leave, but the systems work differently.

- In **Latvia**, if you get sick, the first day is unpaid. From the second to the tenth day, your employer covers part of your salary – 75% for days two and three, and 80% for days four to ten. From the eleventh day onwards, the state takes over the process and pays 80% of your salary. Sick leave can last up to 26 weeks, or even up to a year in serious cases. To qualify, you must have been paying social insurance for at least a few months and have a doctor's note confirming your illness.

- In the **Czech Republic**, your employer pays you 60% of your salary for the first 14 days of sick leave. After that, the state takes over the process, paying between 60% and 72% of your salary, depending on how long you are sick. Employees are automatically covered, but if you are self-employed, you need to sign up for sickness insurance and pay into it for at least three months before you can claim benefits.

Key points:

- **Sick Leave Protection:** Both countries provide income support during sick leave, but self-employed individuals must register for sickness insurance to qualify.
- **Social Insurance:** Always check that your employer pays your social insurance to avoid issues when you need benefits.
- **Health Coverage for Unemployed:** If you are unemployed, register as a job seeker, and the state will cover your health insurance in both countries.

Unemployment and Job Support

Both countries provide unemployment benefits if you lose your job, but you must have worked for a certain period and paid taxes.

- In **Latvia**: You must have worked 12 months within the last 16 months.
- In the **Czech Republic**: You must have worked 12 months within the last 2 years.

If you are unemployed, you can register as a job seeker in both countries, and the state will cover your health insurance.

Workplace Safety and Protection

Both countries have labour inspection offices that ensure employers follow the rules and keep workplaces safe. Inspectors can:

- Visit workplaces,
- Check working conditions,
- Fine employers who break the law.
- Workplace inspections are conducted to protect employees.

Latvia: Key Employment Laws

- **Labour Law (Darba likums)** – Regulates employment contracts, working hours, wages, and termination rules.
- **Law on State Social Insurance (Valsts sociālās apdrošināšanas likums)** – Covers health insurance, sick leave, unemployment benefits, and pensions.
- **Law on Personal Income Tax (Iedzīvotāju ienākuma nodokļa likums)** – Governs income tax payments for employees and self-employed individuals.
- **Cabinet Regulations (Ministru kabineta noteikumi)** – Includes rules for internships, workplace safety, and youth employment.

Useful Links:

- **Official Latvian Legislation:** <https://likumi.lv>
- **State Social Insurance Agency of the Republic of Latvia:** <https://www.usaa.gov.lv>
- **State Employment Agency of the Republic of Latvia:** <https://www.nva.gov.lv/>

Czech Republic: Key Employment Laws

- **Labour Code No. 262/2006 Coll.** – Main employment law covering contracts, working hours, wages, and work conditions.
- **Sickness Insurance Act No. 187/2006 Coll.** – Explains how employees receive sickness benefits.
- **Labour Inspection Act No. 251/2005 Coll.** – Allows inspections to ensure employers follow workplace safety rules.
- **Employment Act No. 435/2004 Coll.** – Defines rights and duties of employees, employers, and the government in the job market.

Useful Links:

- **Official Czech Legislation:** <https://www.zakonyprolidi.cz>
- **Sickness Insurance:** <https://www.mpsv.cz/nemocenske-pojisteni>
- **Job Seeker Registration and Benefits:**
<https://www.mpsv.cz/web/cz/jsem-u-kurzu>
<https://www.uradprace.cz/web/cz/elektronicka-komunikace>

Working Legally in Another EU Country

As a European Union (EU) citizen, you have the right to work in any EU country without a work permit. This freedom is guaranteed by EU laws that ensure fair treatment of workers across member states.

EU citizens do not need a work visa to work in another EU country. Thanks to EU freedom of movement laws, all EU citizens have the right to:

- Work in any EU country without a work permit or visa.
- Be treated the same as local workers in terms of salary, working conditions, and social benefits.
- Live in another EU country for work, as long as they are employed, self-employed, or financially self-sufficient.
- However, if they plan to stay for more than 3 months, they may need to register residence and prove that they have a job or enough income to support themselves.

Right to Work in Any EU Country

- **Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), Article 45** – prohibits discrimination based on nationality between workers of the member states as regards employment, remuneration and other conditions of work and employment.
- **Regulation (EU) No 492/2011 on Free Movement of Workers** – specifies the right of workers of any European Union Member State to move to and access employment in another Member State without unjustified discrimination.

Laws Apply to Your Work in EU

- If you work under a contract in another EU country – Your employment is governed by that country's labour laws, including wages, working hours, and social security contributions.
- If you are posted to another EU country by your employer – The Posted Workers Directive ensures that you still get basic employment rights (e.g., minimum wage, work conditions).
- If you are self-employed – You must follow the legal and tax rules of the country where you work.

Understanding these laws helps you work legally and safely in another EU country, ensuring you get fair pay, social security, and protection under the law

Paying Taxes Matters



Paying taxes might not sound exciting, but it is essential for your financial security and access to important benefits in both **Latvia** and the **Czech Republic**. Here is why it matters:

Health and Social Security

- Taxes fund health insurance and sick leave. If you get sick or injured, you can get financial support while recovering. Self-employed individuals must register for sickness insurance to qualify for these benefits.

Unemployment Benefits

- If you lose your job, you can apply for unemployment benefits – but only if you have been paying taxes. Without tax contributions, you will not qualify for this support.

Pension for the Future

- Taxes help build your future pension, ensuring you will have money to live on after retirement. Self-employed people must contribute separately to secure their pension rights.

Maternity and Paternity Leave

- If you or your partner have a baby, tax contributions ensure you can take time-off with financial support. Without having paid taxes, you will not qualify for these benefits.

Legal Protection

- Paying taxes proves that you work legally. It gives you the right to fair pay, safe working conditions, and protection if an employer or client treats you unfairly.

What Happens if You do not Pay Taxes

Working without paying taxes – whether as an employee or freelancer – comes with serious risks:

- **No legal protection:** If a client refuses to pay, you cannot take legal action.
- **No unemployment support:** You will not get financial help if you lose your job.
- **No pension:** Without contributions, you risk financial struggles in retirement.
- **No sick leave or maternity benefits:** You will not qualify for paid leave if you fall ill or have a child.

- **Fines and legal issues:** Tax authorities (like VID in Latvia or the Trade Licensing Office in the Czech Republic) can issue fines, demand back payments, or even restrict future self-employment.

How to Stay Safe and Legal

To protect yourself and access benefits, follow these steps:

- **Register as self-employed:** In Latvia register with VID; in the Czech Republic register with the Trade Licensing Office.
- **Track your income:** Use spreadsheets or accounting apps to record earnings.
- **Issue invoices:** This ensures your payments are official and legally protected.

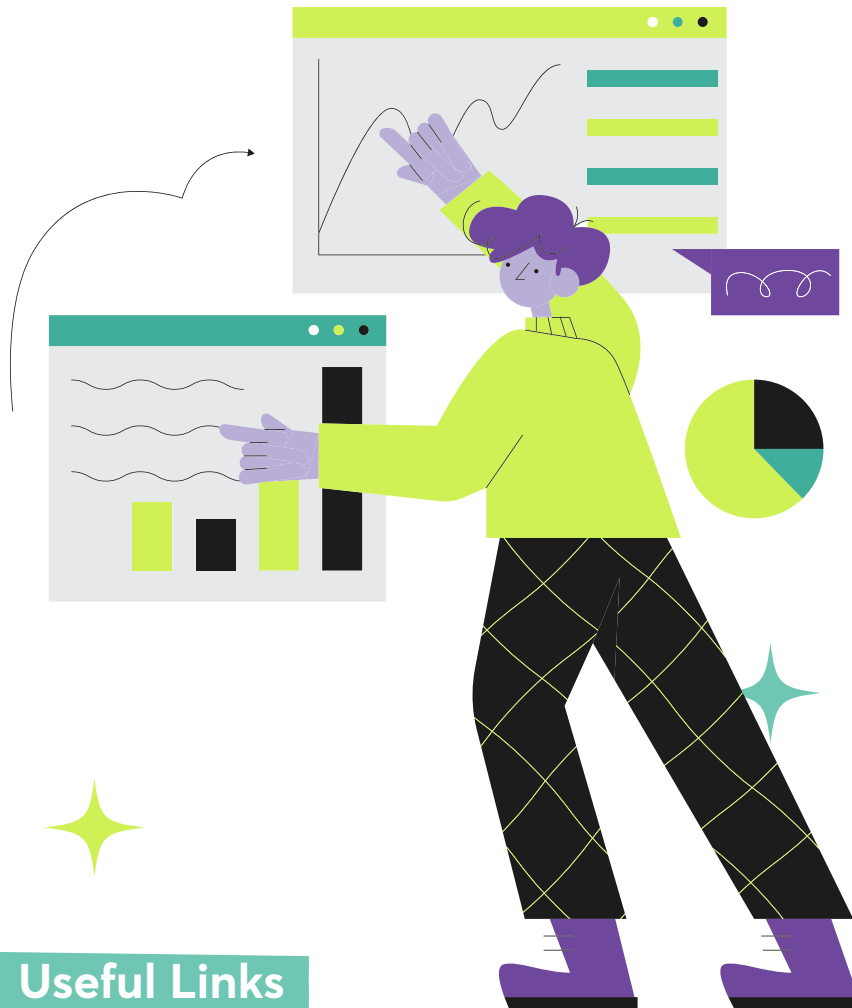
How Much Tax You Need to Pay

Tax rates vary by country and income. As a freelancer or self-employed person, you usually need to pay:

- **Income tax:** A percentage of your earnings.
- **Social contributions:** Covers health insurance, pension, and social benefits.
- **Business tax (if applicable):** Some countries charge extra for freelancers.

Tip:

Both Latvia and the Czech Republic offer special tax rates or exemptions for young entrepreneurs or those with low income. Check your country's tax office website or ask an accountant for more details.



Useful Links

Latvia

- State Revenue Service (VID)
<https://www.vid.gov.lv/en>
- Why pay taxes? (Latvian Public Media)
<https://www.lsm.lv/raksts/dzive--stils/ikdienai/kads-labums-nodoklu-maksasanas-skaidro-finansu-analitiks.a459694/>
- Why pay taxes? (Swedbank)
<https://blog.swedbank.lv/ikdiena/budzeta-planosana/kapec-jamaksa-nodokli-729>

Czech Republic

- Financial Administration of the Czech Republic:
<https://financnisprava.gov.cz/>
- Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs:
<https://www.mpsu.cz/>
- PwC Tax Summaries – Individual Taxes on Personal Income in the Czech Republic:
<https://taxsummaries.pwc.com/>
- Why Do We Pay Taxes?
<https://www.econ.muni.cz/aktuality/proc-platime-dane>

Avoiding taxes might seem like an easy way to save money, but it can lead to serious consequences. Paying taxes ensures legal protection, access to social benefits, and a secure future. Whether you are freelancing, selling artwork, or starting a small business, registering and paying taxes is the smartest move for long-term success.

Advice: If you are unsure how to start, both Latvia and the Czech Republic offer **free business consultations** for young entrepreneurs. **Do not hesitate to ask for help!**

- **Latvia:** Latvian Investment and Development Agency (LIAA)
<https://www.liaa.gov.lv/en>
- **Czech Republic:** CzechInvest
<https://www.czechinvest.org/en>

Advice for Czech Graduates

If you finish school and do not have a job, are not self-employed, and have no income, you still need to pay for health insurance. This must be paid to the health insurance company where you are registered, and failure to pay could result in fines and debt collection. The best solution is to register as a **job seeker** at the **Labour Office** www.uradprace.cz. During this period, the state will cover your health insurance, but most graduates cannot receive unemployment benefits because they have not worked long enough (12 months of pension insurance).

Your Responsibilities and Rights as an Employee or Freelancer

Whether you work for a company or as a freelancer, understanding and following your contract is essential. Your contract outlines key details like pay, responsibilities, deadlines, and intellectual property rights. Knowing what you agree to helps you avoid misunderstandings and ensures fair treatment.

It is also important to negotiate terms before signing – discussing pay, work expectations, and deadlines can help you secure the best deal for your skills. However, your responsibility does not end after signing. To build trust with employers or clients, you must also meet deadlines, deliver quality work, and follow the agreed terms. Keeping your commitments is just as important as knowing your rights.

Freelancer vs. Employee: What's the Difference?

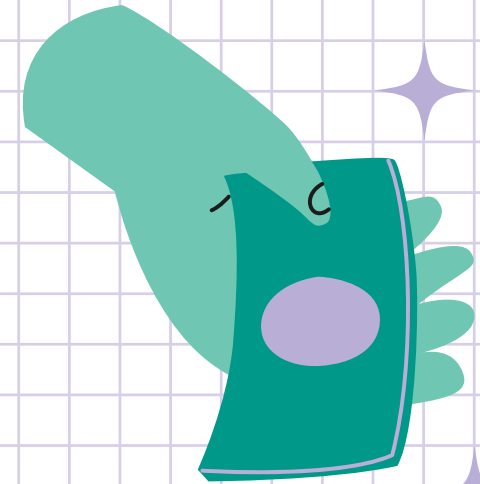
- **An employee** works for a company under a contract that guarantees a stable salary, fixed working hours, and benefits like paid holidays and social security. Their employer decides their tasks, and they must follow company rules.
- **A freelancer** is self-employed and works on short-term projects for different clients. They do not have a fixed salary or benefits but have more freedom to choose their work, set their own rates, and manage their schedule.

Contract Differences

- **Employee Contract** – A long-term or terminated agreement with fixed pay, work hours, and legal protections.
- **Freelance Agreement** – A short-term contract that focuses on project details, deadlines, and payment terms without employer-provided benefits.

Keep track of your income and expenses

Simple accounting software like Wave or QuickBooks (or simple excel table) can help manage your finances.



Types of Employment Forms

Latvia

Ways to Start a Career in the Creative Industries in Latvia

1. As an employee, they can work under a job contract, service contract, or royalty agreement as a private individual.
2. Economic activity performer – as a natural person conducting business without establishing a company It can be done in different ways:
 - As a self-employed person under the general tax regime;
 - As a self-employed person under the microbusiness tax regime;
 - As a performer of economic activity with a reduced patent fee;
 - As a declared economic activity for property rental activities.
3. If you want to run a business as an individual merchant, you must register in the Commercial Register. This applies if you meet certain conditions while running your business. You must register as an individual merchant if:
 - Your annual business turnover is more than €284,600;
 - Your annual turnover is over €28,500, and you employ more than five people at the same time;
 - Your business activities match those of a commercial agent;
 - Your business activities are similar to those of a broker.

Tax book

When starting a job as an employee, the most important steps are signing an employment contract with your employer and submitting your tax book to the State Revenue Service (VID) to ensure correct tax deductions.

The electronic tax book is a digital record that stores information about a person's workplaces, applicable income tax rates, and eligible tax reliefs.

For more details on how to obtain, submit, and why the electronic tax book is necessary, visit the official website:

www.vid.gov.lv/lu/algas-nodokla-gramatina

1. Employee

If an employee has signed a **job contract** or a **service contract** and has submitted their **electronic tax book**, the following tax rates apply in 2025:

- Minimum wage: €740 per month (gross, before taxes)
- Tax-free allowance: €510 per month
- Employee's social security contributions (VSAOI): 10.5%
- Personal income tax (IIN): 25.5%

Be aware that this information applies to 2025 situation, so be informed and stay updated on tax changes on the Ministry of Finance website: www.fm.gov.lv

Want to know how much you will receive after taxes?
Use the official salary calculator here:

www.fm.gov.lv/lu/algas-aprekins-2025-gadam-atbilstosi-darbaspeka-nodoklu-izmainu-piedavajumam

2. Economic activity performer

A person performing economic activity must register the commencement of his or her economic activity with the State Revenue Service.

A self-employed person under the general tax payment regime pays personal income tax (IIN) and state social insurance contributions (VSAOI)

- You must keep accounting records, tracking your income and related expenses.
- Once a year, you must submit an annual income declaration to the State Revenue Service (VID).
- Every quarter, you must submit a „Self-Employed or Employee Report“.

The personal income tax (IIN) rate is progressive, meaning it changes based on your income level:

- For annual income up to €105,300 – 25.5%
- For annual income over €105,300 – 33%
- If you do not earn income from self-employment or if the calculated personal income tax (IIN) is less than €50, you must pay a minimum annual personal income tax of €50.
- If the income from economic activity exceeds 740 euros per month, you must pay state social insurance contributions (VSAOI) on at least €740. Any income above this amount is subject to pension insurance contributions.
- The state social insurance contribution (VSAOI) rate is 31.07%. In addition to VSAOI, self-employed individuals must also make quarterly contributions to pension insurance. The pension insurance contribution rate is 10% of the income that is not subject to the main VSAOI payments.

A self-employed person under the microbusiness tax (MUN) regime pays microbusiness tax (MUN).

The microbusiness tax (MUN) is paid based on the business turnover.

- **MUN rate: 25%**
- **Tax distribution:**
 - 80% goes to state social insurance for the self-employed person.
 - 20% goes to personal income tax (IIN).

Microbusiness tax (MUN) payers can use a **simplified tax payment system** without the need for bookkeeping by opening a **Business Income Account (SDI account)** (SDI -Saimnieciskās darbības ieņēmumu kontu konts)

- The SDI account is a special bank account that automates tax payments for self-employed individuals under the MUN regime.
- SDI account users do not need to submit quarterly MUN declarations or manually pay the tax – everything is processed automatically.

More information about self-employment is available at the following website:

www.vid.gov.lv/lv/saimnieciskas-darbibas-veiceji



3. Individual merchant

Individual merchants are personally liable for all business transactions with their entire assets. An individual merchant must register with the Enterprise Register if they engage in business activities and meet certain conditions:

- if the annual business turnover exceeds €284,600;
- if the annual turnover exceeds €28,500 and the business employs more than five people at the same time;
- if the business activities match those of a commercial agent;
- if the business activities are similar to those of a broker.



An individual merchant can choose between two tax regimes:

1. **General regime** – Pays personal income tax (IIN) on business income and state social insurance contributions (VSAOI).
 - IIN is paid once a year by submitting an annual income declaration the following year.
 - VSAOI is declared and paid quarterly for months in which income was earned:
 - / If monthly income is up to €500, the contribution rate is 10%.
 - / If monthly income exceeds €500, the contribution rate is 31.07%.
 - Business expenses can be deducted from taxable income.
2. **Microbusiness tax regime** – Requires paying microbusiness tax (MUN), which includes state social insurance contributions (VSAOI).
 - MUN rate: 25% of turnover.
 - For turnover exceeding €25,000 per year: The tax rate is 40% on the amount exceeding this threshold.
 - Expenses cannot be deducted from taxable income.

Information on how to register as an individual merchant and the required documents is available on the Enterprise Register's website:

www.ur.gov.lv.

More information (in Latvian) here –

<https://www.vid.gov.lv/lu/ka-registret-un-veikt-saimniecisko-darbibu>

Types of contracts

An **Employment Contract** is a written agreement between an employee and an employer, signed before starting work. It outlines job responsibilities and salary, as required by the Labor Law.

Under this contract:

- The employee follows the employer's work regulations and is provided with the necessary equipment and tools.
- The employer is responsible for workplace safety.
- The employee is entitled to annual leave.
- The employee receives social benefits, including paid sick leave, severance pay, unemployment benefits, parental allowances, and a state pension.
- Taxes are calculated, withheld, and paid by the employer.



A Service Contract is

an agreement where one party agrees to complete a specific task, produce an item, or organize an event for another party in exchange for payment, using their own tools and equipment. This contract is regulated by the Civil Law. The parties involved in a service contract are the client (who orders the work) and the contractor (who completes the work). The contractor can be either an individual or a legal entity.

Under this contract

- The **worker sets their own work schedule and location.**
- The **worker determines deadlines** and submits completed work with a handover document.
- The **worker is responsible for their own safety and health** during the work process.
- The **worker does not receive paid annual leave.**
- The **worker is not entitled to paid sick leave.**
- A **self-employed person pays their own taxes**, except when they are not registered as self-employed.

Applicable taxes in 2025 (Be attentive and stay updated on the latest changes)

If an individual has signed an **employment contract** or a **service contract** (without being registered as self-employed) and has submitted their **electronic tax book**, the following tax rates apply:

- **Tax-free allowance: €510 per month**
- **State social insurance contributions (VSAOI): 10.5%**
- **Personal income tax (IIN): 25.5%**



A Royalty Agreement

is a contract between two parties (the client and the author/performer) that establishes the creation of a copyrighted work in exchange for payment and its transfer to the client. The Copyright Law defines a copyrighted work as a creation resulting from the author's intellectual activity in the fields of literature, science, or art.



Types of copyrighted works (copyright objects) include:

- Literary works (books, brochures, speeches, computer programs, lectures, appeals, reports, sermons, and similar works);
- Dramatic and musical-dramatic works, scripts, literary projects for audiovisual works;
- Choreographic works and pantomimes;
- Musical works with or without lyrics;
- Audiovisual works;
- Drawings, paintings, sculptures, graphic works, and other artistic creations;
- Applied art works, decorations, and stage design works;

- Design works;
- Photographic works and works created in a similar manner to photography;
- Sketches, drafts, and projects for buildings and structures, architectural solutions, other architectural works, urban planning projects, and garden and park designs, as well as fully or partially constructed buildings and completed urban planning or landscape projects;
- Geographical maps, plans, sketches, plastic works related to geography, topography, and other sciences;
- Other authorial works.

A royalty agreement includes the same conditions as a service contract, covering work execution terms, workplace safety, and social guarantees. If an individual is not registered as self-employed, the client must pay only personal income tax (IIN) at a rate of 25% from the amount specified in the royalty agreement. If the individual is registered as self-employed, tax rates and other conditions for 2025 can be found at:

www.vid.gov.lu/lu/media/1900/download?attachment.

Czech Republic

Main Differences Between Being Self-Employed (OSVČ) and an Employee in the Czech Republic

Self-Employed (OSVČ – Osoba samostatně výdělečně činná)

- More freedom and flexibility in work.
- Responsible for keeping tax records and paying taxes.
- Pays higher social and health insurance contributions than employees.
- No paid leave, meaning if they don't work, they don't earn money.
- Not protected by the Labour Code, meaning fewer rights compared to employees.
- Must register for social security and pay all contributions independently.
- No unemployment benefits or severance pay if business slows down or ends.
- Can deduct business expenses and may qualify for a simplified flat-rate tax (paušální daň).
- No employer-provided workplace protections or health and safety measures.

Employee

Legal Protection

- Covered by the Labour Code (Act No. 262/2006 Coll.), ensuring fair wages, working hours, and leave entitlements.

Employer Pays Contributions

- **Social and Health Insurance** – The employer pays a large part of contributions, reducing costs for employees.
- **Retirement Pension** – Employees contribute to the state pension system automatically.

Financial Security

- **Unemployment Benefits** – If laid off, employees can receive state unemployment benefits.
- **Severance Pay** – Employees may be entitled to compensation if dismissed under certain conditions.
- **Paid Sick Leave** – Employees get sick pay from the employer (first 14 days) and then from the state.

Workplace Benefits

- **Paid Vacation** – Employees get at least 4 weeks of paid leave per year.
- **Meal Vouchers & Bonuses** – Many employers provide meal allowances, bonuses, and other benefits.
- **Work Equipment & Protection** – Employers must provide necessary tools, uniforms, and safety gear if required.
- **Health & Safety Regulations** – Employers must follow workplace safety laws, provide training, and conduct regular safety checks.

Family & Personal Benefits

- **Maternity & Parental Leave** – Employees can take **paid maternity leave (28 weeks)** and receive **state parental support (up to 4 years)**.
- **Overtime Pay** – Extra compensation for **overtime, night shifts, and weekend work**.

How to Become Self-Employed (OSVČ)

To become self-employed, you must register a self-employed (OSVČ). Fill out the JRF form (Jednotný registrační formulář – Unified Registration Form)

- Submit it online at <https://www.rzp.cz/epo-jrf/cs/nove-podani> → Fee: 800 CZK.
- Submit it in person at any Trade Licensing Office (Živnostenský úřad) → Fee: 1,000 CZK.

The JRF form also allows you to:

- Register with health insurance and the Social Security Administration.
- Automatically register with the Tax Office.

Requirements for registration:

- You must be at least 18 years old.
- You must have a clean criminal record (checked automatically by authorities).

Choosing the type of business (živnost)

- Free trade (volná živnost) – no qualifications needed.
- Craft or regulated trade (řemeslná, vázaná živnost) – needs qualifications.
- Licensed trade (koncesovaná živnost) – needs government approval.

More info:

<https://www.uyfakturuje.cz/fakturopedie/jak-si-zalozit-zivnost/>

Main vs. Side Business Activity

- Main Business Activity → Your only source of income (you don't have a job).
- Side Business Activity → You have a regular job or are a student and run a business on the side.

For students under 26 in full-time education, OSVČ is always considered a side business.

Benefits of a side business:

- Lower social and health insurance payments.
- No need to pay social and health insurance in the first year.

More info:

<https://www.fakturaonline.cz/podnikatelsky-zpravodaj/jak-zacit-podnikat/rozdily-mezí-hlavní-a-vedlejší-cinnosti-osvč-praktický-průvodce-pro-podnikatele>



Types of Employment Contracts

Full-Time Employment Contract (HPP – Pracovní poměr, § 30 - 73a LC)

- Most common type of contract.
- Full-time job = 40 hours per week.
- Includes paid leave, sick pay, and other benefits.
- Provides stability and legal protection for employees.



Part-Time or Temporary Work Agreements

Agreement on Work Performance

(DPP – Dohoda o provedení práce, § 74 - § 77b LC)

- For one-time or short-term jobs.
- Max 300 hours per year for the same employer.
- Earnings up to 11,499 CZK per month → No social or health insurance payments.

Agreement on Work Activity

(DPČ – Dohoda o pracovní činnosti, § 74 - § 77b LC)

Allows working **up to 20 hours per week** for the same employer.

If you earn more than 4,500 CZK per month, you must pay social and health insurance.

Occasional Work and Tax-Free Income

- In the Czech Republic, you can earn up to 50,000 CZK per year from occasional jobs without paying income tax.
- These jobs must not be regular and must not require a business license.

Legal basis: Income Tax Act No. 586/1992 Sb., § 10(3)(a).

Get Ready for a Job Interview



Your first job interview in the creative industry can be both exciting and challenging. To help you prepare and make a great impression, here is a step-by-step guide tailored to young professionals and recent graduates in the creative fields.

Useful links:

Latvian

- IR Liepāja Guide
<https://irliepaja.lv/liepajnieki/celvedis-darba-intervijai-soli-pa-solim-ka-veiksmi/>
- Enjoy Recruitment Blog
<https://www.enjoyrecruitment.lv/lu/blog/ka-sagatavoties-darba-intervijai>
- DarbaGuru Tips
<https://www.darbaguru.lv/lu/padomi/348-7-padomi-ka-labi-sagatavoties-darba-intervijai>

Czech

- Jobs.cz - 10 Tips on How to Successfully Prepare for a Job Interview
<https://www.jobs.cz/poradna/10-rad-jak-uspesne-zuladnout-pripravit-se-na-pohovor/>
- Dobrá Práce - How to Behave at a Job Interview
<https://www.dobraprace.cz/jak-se-chovat-u-pohovoru.php>

Research the Company and the Job Position

- Understand the company's work: Visit the company's website and social media pages to learn about their projects, values, and work culture. This will show your interest and help you determine if the company aligns with your career goals.
- Analyse the job requirements: Carefully read the job listing and understand the required skills and responsibilities. Prepare examples from your experience that match these requirements.

Prepare Your Portfolio

- Select your best work: Choose projects that showcase your skills and align with the job role you are applying for.
- Ensure professional presentation: Make sure all works are well-organized and easy to review. If you have a digital portfolio, ensure its accessible online through platforms like Behance or your personal website.

Practice Answers to Common Interview Questions

- Tell me about yourself: Prepare a short summary of your education, experience, and motivation for working in this industry.
- Strengths and weaknesses: Identify your key strengths and think of constructive ways to discuss your weaknesses, showing how you work to improve them.
- Portfolio discussion: Be ready to explain your creative process behind the work in your portfolio, emphasizing problem-solving and technical skills.

Prepare Questions for the Interviewer

Employers appreciate candidates who ask thoughtful questions, as it shows engagement and enthusiasm. Consider asking:

- What are the biggest challenges in this role?
- What do you expect from a new team member in the first few months?
- Can you tell me more about the company's policy and work

Dress Appropriately and Be on Time

- Choose an outfit that reflects the company's culture while maintaining a professional appearance. For creative fields, a slightly more relaxed but stylish approach may be acceptable.
- Arrive 10 – 15 minutes early if the interview is in person or test your internet connection and software setup in advance for online interviews.

Follow Up After the Interview

- Send a short thank-you email within 24 hours, expressing your appreciation for the opportunity and briefly reinforcing your interest in the position.
- If you do not hear back within the expected timeframe, consider sending a polite follow-up message to inquire about the next steps.

With thorough preparation, confidence, and a well-presented portfolio, you can increase your chances of securing a job in the creative industry. Good luck with your interviews!

Employment Contract

Every legal employment relationship begins with the agreement of an employment contract. **An employment contract** is a written agreement between you and your employer.

Whether you are starting your first job, freelancing, or working on a project basis, contracts protect your rights and set clear expectations between you and your employer or client.



Here is what you need to check before signing any contract to avoid misunderstandings or unfair conditions.

Before signing any work contract, make sure you understand what you are agreeing to, so take your time, read it carefully, and ask questions if something is unclear.

A good contract should clearly state:



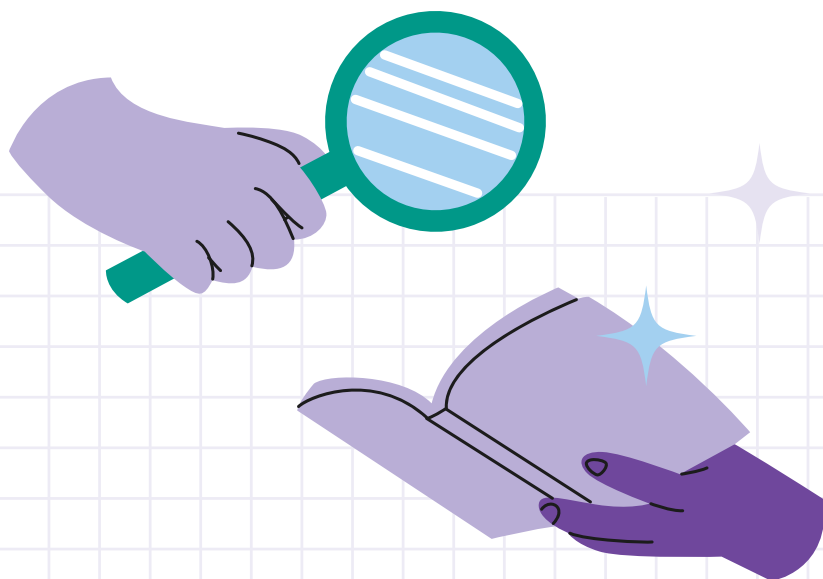
- **employee and employer details**
- **job role**
- **salary**
- **salary payment conditions**
- **working hours**
- **and start/end date**
- **holiday leave**
- **notice periods**
- **probation period** if there is one.
- **your place of work** (office, remote, or hybrid)
- and any extra benefits like bonuses or transport allowances should also be specified.

Probation Period & Termination

Many jobs have a probation period, usually between 1 – 3 months, where both you and the employer can decide if it is a good fit. Check how long it lasts and whether you'll be fully paid during this time. The contract should also explain the notice period – how much time you or the employer must give before ending the job.

Non-Compete & Hidden Clauses

Some contracts may restrict where you can work after you leave, preventing you from working for competitors or starting your own business. If this seems unfair, negotiate before signing. Also, watch out for hidden clauses about overtime, deductions, or secondary jobs that may limit your options.



Legal Protection & Social Security

Make sure your contract follows labour laws in your country:



Latvia

- Labor Law Regulations: Check official rules in the Labor Law <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/26019-darba-likums>
- Consultation Services: The State Labor Inspectorate can provide advice on work agreements. <https://www.udi.gov.lv/lv>
- Work Agreement Sample: Find an example contract here

The Czech Republic

- Official Regulations: Labor law rules are available on Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (Průvodce) <https://www.mpsu.cz/>

Ensure your employer is paying social security contributions so that you are covered for health insurance, pension, and unemployment benefits.

Written vs. Verbal Agreements

If your employer promises **bonuses, extra leave, or salary increases**, get it in **writing! Verbal agreements are not legally binding**, and you may not be able to claim them later.

Final Tips

Never sign contract under pressure – take your time to read and understand everything.

If something is unclear, ask questions or seek advice.

Remember to store your signed contract in a safe place and consider taking a photo or scanning it to keep an electronic copy as well.

This way, you will always have access to your documents for reference.

A well-understood contract ensures fair treatment and job security, so do not rush!



Your Responsibilities as an Employee

Being an employee comes with responsibilities that ensure a smooth and fair work environment. Understanding and following these expectations will help you succeed in your job and maintain good professional relationships.

Do Your Job Well

- Your main responsibility is to perform the tasks assigned to you in your contract. Complete your work on time and always give your best effort.

Follow Workplace Rules

- Every company has its own rules, including dress code, punctuality, and workplace behaviour. Respect these guidelines and follow any safety procedures to ensure a productive work environment.

Take Care of Company Property

- If your employer provides you with tools, equipment, or other materials, use them responsibly. Avoid damage or misuse and report any issues immediately.

Respect Working Hours

- Arriving on time and sticking to your agreed schedule is essential. If you need to be late or absent, inform your employer as soon as possible.

Keep Information Private

- Many workplaces deal with sensitive information, such as customer details or business strategies. Never share confidential company information with unauthorized people, even after leaving the job.

Treat Others with Respect

- A professional attitude towards colleagues, managers, and customers is expected. Avoid any form of discrimination, harassment, or unnecessary conflicts.

Stay Safe at Work

- Always follow health and safety rules. Use protective equipment when required and report any hazards or accidents immediately.

Keep Your Personal Information Updated

- If your contact details, address, or bank account changes, notify your employer so they can update their records.

Report Workplace Issues

- If you notice broken equipment, unsafe conditions, or unethical behaviour, inform your employer. Addressing problems early helps maintain a fair and safe work environment.

Know Your Legal Responsibilities

- If you have additional income outside your main job, make sure you pay the necessary taxes. Follow all legal requirements related to your employment.

Avoid Conflicts of Interest

- Do not engage in activities that could harm your employer's business, such as working for a direct competitor without permission.

Quitting Your Job the Right Way

- If you decide to leave, submit a formal letter of resignation. This should include your job title, last working day (based on your contract's notice period), and optionally, a brief thank-you note for the experience.

Work Professionally Until Your Last Day

- Complete your ongoing projects. Make sure all your tasks are finished, files are organized, and instructions for any pending work are clearly documented so the next person can take over easily.
- Maintain a positive attitude. Avoid saying negative things about the company, your boss, or colleagues, even if you had issues. Show gratitude for the experience and opportunities you gained.
- Respect workplace rules. Arrive on time, stick to your usual schedule, and do not slack off or leave tasks unfinished just because you are leaving.

- And finally, exit gracefully. On your last day, thank your team and employer for the time you have spent working together. A quick thank-you e-mail or conversation shows maturity and professionalism.

Extra tips

- Use a professional email address with your name – avoid anything silly or inappropriate.
- Keep your social media profiles private – your future employer might check!
- Do not post anything inappropriate online, like photos or comments you would not want everyone to see.
- Do not share personal info or gossip online – stay professional.
- If you are ever unsure about something at work, just ask your boss! There is no such thing as a "dumb" question while you are learning.
- Remember: staying informed is way smarter than staying in the dark!

Employer Responsibilities

Every employer has a responsibility to ensure that their employees work in a **fair, safe, and legal environment**. If you start a job, it is important to know what your employer must do to protect your rights.

Employment Contract and Fair Pay

Before you start working, your employer must provide a written contract which you have already seen before. In Latvia, employers must classify job roles according to the Latvian Occupation Classification System (in Latvian)

<https://www.lm.gov.lv/lv/klasifikacija/profesiju-klasifikators-5> which helps define salary expectations and benefits.



Salaries must be **paid on time**, following the date stated in your contract. If your salary is late, you have the right to remind your employer or report the issue to the **State Labor Inspectorate in Latvia and State Labour Inspection Office (SŪIP)** www.suip.cz.

Employers are also responsible for deducting taxes and transferring them to the government. If you want to check how your **salary is calculated**, use online tools like:

- Latvia's salary calculator
<https://kalkulatori.lv/lv/algas-kalkulators>
- Czech salary calculator
<https://www.penize.cz/kalkulacky/mzdova-kalkulacka>

Safe and Healthy Working Conditions

Your employer **must provide a safe workplace**, ensuring that all health and safety regulations are followed. This means:

- Providing **protective equipment and proper ventilation** if you work with hazardous materials.
- Offering **safety training** and ensuring that all employees know how to handle work-related risks.
- Investigating and supporting employees in case of workplace accidents.

The rules are similar to school workshop safety guidelines, but in a professional setting, it is your employer's duty to enforce them.

Working Hours, Leave & Breaks

Employers must follow labour laws regarding **working hours, overtime, and breaks**. This includes:

- **A standard workweek** with legally required rest breaks.
- **Paid annual leave** (at least 4 weeks per year).
- **Sick leave and maternity/paternity leave** when needed.
- Special working hour limits for teenagers and no **night shifts** for minors.

Fair Treatment & Workplace Ethics

Employers must treat employees **fairly and equally**, regardless of age, gender, race, religion, or disability. Pay should be equal for the same work, and there should be no discrimination in hiring, promotions, or salaries.

Employers must also **take action against workplace harassment and violence**, ensuring a respectful and safe working environment. If an employee reports bullying or mistreatment, the employer is legally required to **investigate and respond appropriately**.



Legal Termination & Employee Rights

If an employer decides to end your contract, they must follow proper legal procedures, including:

- Giving **advance notice** according to the contract terms.
- **Providing valid reasons** for dismissal.
- Paying **severance compensation** if required.

Employers must also **keep proper records** of your working hours, salary, and tax contributions. This ensures that your social insurance is paid, covering **healthcare, unemployment benefits, and pension contributions**.

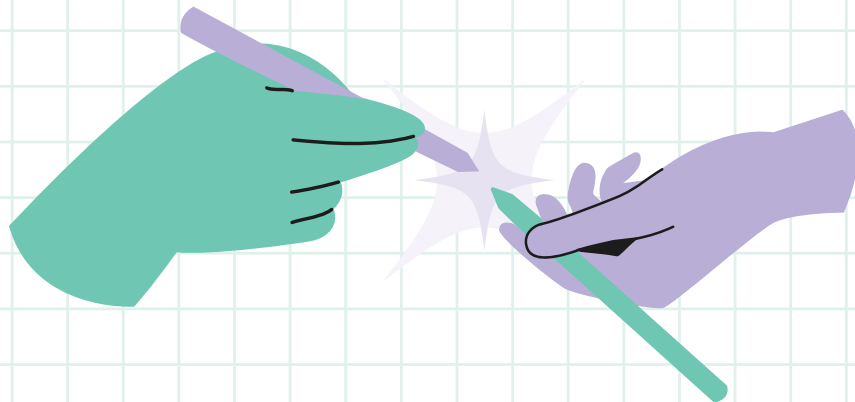
What to Do if Your Employer Fails to Meet These Duties

If your employer does not follow these legal obligations, you can report them to the

State Labor Inspectorate <https://www.vdi.gov.lv/> in Latvia

State Labour Inspection Office (SÚIP) www.suip.cz in Czech Republic

or seek legal assistance. Knowing your rights **helps you stay protected and ensures fair treatment at work**. If something seems unfair, do not hesitate to **ask questions or seek advice!**



Essential Things to Remember as a Freelancer



Freelancing in the creative industry offers flexibility, independence, and the opportunity to work on exciting projects. However, with this freedom comes responsibility – your success depends on your work ethic, reputation, and ability to manage your business professionally. Here are the key things every young freelancer should remember.

Work Ethic: Your Professional Mindset Matters

Freelancers must be self-disciplined and reliable to succeed. Clients expect high-quality work, delivered on time, without constant supervision.

- **Be Organized** – Set clear deadlines for yourself and track ongoing projects. Use tools like Trello, Notion, or Google Calendar to stay on top of your work.
- **Communicate Clearly** – Respond to emails and messages professionally and in a timely manner.
- **Meet Deadlines** – Your reputation depends on your reliability. Always deliver work on time or communicate early if delays happen.
- **Be Honest About Your Abilities** – Do not overpromise – take on projects that match your skill level and gradually expand your expertise.

Reputation: Your Most Valuable Asset

As a freelancer, your reputation is everything – **clients will recommend you to others based on your professionalism, quality of work, and reliability.**

- **Deliver High-Quality Work** – A satisfied client is more likely to hire you again and refer you to others.
- **Be Professional** – Even in creative fields, clients expect a business-like attitude. Keep interactions respectful and constructive.
- **Build Positive Relationships** – Stay in touch with previous clients, as they might offer you future work or introduce you to new opportunities.
- **Handle Criticism Gracefully** – Learn from feedback and use it to improve your work. A good freelancer is always evolving.

Tip:

Ask satisfied clients for testimonials and showcase them on your website or portfolio. Positive reviews help attract new customers!

Protect Yourself with an Agreement

Never start a project without clear, written terms. This prevents misunderstandings and protects both you and the client.

- **Define Project Scope** – Clearly state what is included in the price (e.g., number of revisions, specific deliverables).
- **Set Payment Terms** – Decide when and how you will be paid (e.g., upfront payment, 50% deposit, full payment after delivery).
- **Establish a Timeline** – Specify deadlines for drafts, final submission, and feedback rounds.
- **Include Termination Terms** – What happens if the client cancels? Do you still get paid for the work done?

Tip:

If you are unsure how to write an agreement, use online contract templates or consult a professional. For example, here (in Latvian) – <http://www.e-jurists.lv/ligumi/> or here (in Czech) <https://www.pruvodcepodnikanim.cz/>

Know Your Rights as a Freelancer

Unlike full-time employees, freelancers do not have automatic legal protections like sick leave or job security. However, you still have rights:

- **You have the right to be paid for your work** – If a client refuses to pay, you can take legal action (if you have a written contract).
- **You can negotiate your rates** – Do not accept unfairly low offers – know the market value of your skills.
- **You own your work unless otherwise agreed** – If you create original artwork, designs, or music, the rights belong to you unless the contract states otherwise.



Do not Forget Your Duties to the Client

Freelancers are service providers, which means keeping clients satisfied is key to success.

Always:

- **Listen Carefully** – Understand client expectations and ask clarifying questions.
- **Deliver What You Promised** – Stay true to the agreed scope of work.
- **Handle Issues Professionally** – If problems arise, communicate openly and suggest solutions.
- **Be Respectful and Courteous** – A good attitude leads to better professional relationships.

Tip:

Even if a project does not go as planned, maintaining professionalism can help preserve your reputation.



Pay Taxes – Stay Legal, Stay Safe

Freelancers are responsible for declaring their income and paying taxes. If you avoid taxes, you risk fines, losing legal protection, and financial problems later.

- **Register as a freelancer**
- **Track Your Income & Expenses**
- **Save for Taxes** and social contributions
- **Understand VAT Rules.**

Tip:

If taxes seem confusing, do not be afraid to consult an accountant or tax administrator in your country, or use online tax calculators specific to your country.

In the Czech Republic:

Czech Social Security Administration (ČSSZ):
<https://www.cssz.cz>

Czech Tax Office (Finanční správa):
<https://www.financnisprava.cz>

In Latvia:

State Revenue Service
<https://www.vid.gov.lv/lv>
<https://eds.vid.gov.lv/login/>

Copyright and Intellectual Property

Understanding copyright law is essential for young professionals in creative industries. Whether you are an artist, designer, musician, or writer, copyright ensures that your work is protected, giving you the right to control how it is used.

Both Latvia and the Czech Republic follow European Union (EU) copyright regulations, but each country has specific national laws and enforcement agencies that help protect creative work.

How Copyright Works

In both countries, copyright applies automatically when you create a work. This means you do not need to register your work for it to be protected. However, keeping records like drafts, dated files, or publication records can help you prove authorship in legal disputes.

While you do not need to use the © symbol, it is often included to remind others that the work is protected.

If you want to use someone else's music, images, text, or designs, you must get permission from the creator unless the work is in the public domain or qualifies as fair use. In both countries, organizations help manage copyright and issue licenses for legal use.

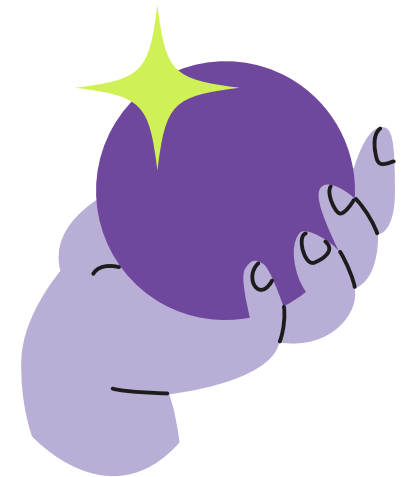
Copyright Protection in Latvia

In Latvia, copyright is regulated by the Copyright Law
<https://likumi.lv/ta/id/5138-autortiesibu-likums>

which grants creators exclusive rights to their works for their lifetime plus 70 years after their death. Copyright applies to literary, artistic, musical, and scientific works, ensuring that the creator controls how their work is used.

Other Forms of Intellectual Property Protection:

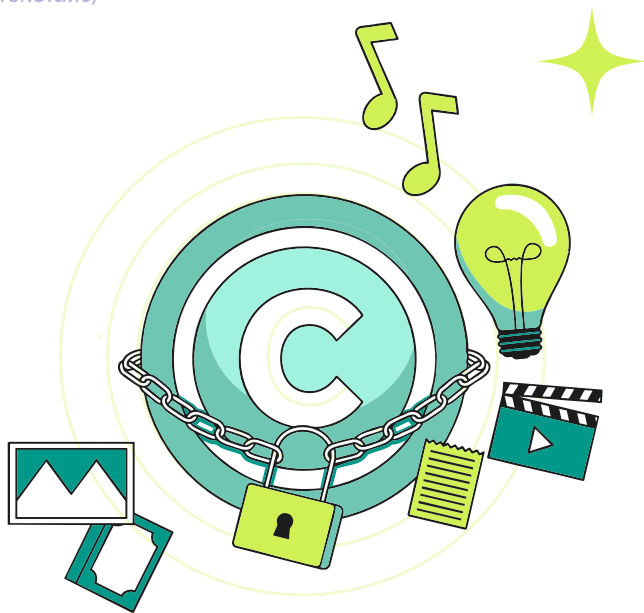
- **Patents** – Protect inventions by granting exclusive rights for a limited time.
- **Trademarks** – Protect brand names, logos, and symbols to distinguish businesses, products, or services in the market.
- How to **protect** your **design** (in Latvian) –
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1zkmuFrGO7w>
- How to **register** your **design** (in Latvian)–
<https://www.lrpv.gov.lv/lu/ka-registret-dizainparaugu>



Understanding Copyright, Patents, and Trademarks

If you are a **creator, inventor, or entrepreneur**, it is important to know how to **protect your work and ideas**. Here is how these three intellectual property rights differ:

- **Copyright** – Protects creative works like books, music, paintings, films, and even software. It gives the creator exclusive rights to use and distribute their work. It applies automatically once the work is created – no registration needed! Check here for more <https://autorskola.lv/>



- **Patent** – Protects inventions like new technology, products, or processes. To get a patent, your invention must be new, useful, and unique. You must register it, and once approved, no one else can copy or sell your invention for a certain period.
- **Trademark** – Protects brand names, logos, and symbols that identify a business. Trademarks help customers recognize a brand and prevent others from using similar names or logos. To have full rights, you need to register your trademark.

Simple Rule:

- **Copyright** protects creative works
- **Patents** protect inventions
- **Trademarks** protect brand identity.

If you are an artist, inventor, or starting a business, knowing these differences will help protect your work and ideas!

What you need to know about copyright if you plan to use another author's work in Latvia, check this guide <https://luportals.lv/skaidrojumi/333942-kas-ir-jazina-par-autortiesibam-ja-plano-izmantot-cita-autora-darbu-2021>.

In Latvia, AKKA/LAA helps manage copyright and issue licenses for using creative content.

Copyright Protection in the Czech Republic

In the **Czech Republic**, copyright law is outlined in the **Autorský zákon (Copyright Law)**, which protects creators in the same way as Latvia's law. Authors automatically own the rights to their work without registration.

Key institutions that help protect intellectual property in the Czech Republic:

- **ÚPV (Industrial Property Office)** – Handles patents, trademarks, and industrial designs. Visit ÚPV <https://www.upv.cz/>
- **OSA (Ochranný svaz autorský)** – Protects music creators, ensuring they receive royalties when their work is used. Visit OSA <https://www.osa.cz/>
- **ČOK (Czech Chamber of Commerce)** – Provides advice on intellectual property and business rights. Visit ČOK <https://www.komora.cz/>

If someone **uses your work without permission**, you can take legal action, which may include financial compensation or stopping them from using it.

How to Protect Your Work

- **Keep Records** – Document the creative process, save drafts, and store copies of your work to prove ownership.
- **Use Contracts** – If working with others, always have a clear agreement on who owns the rights to the final work.
- **Register Your Trademarks or Patents** – If you create a brand, product, or invention, register it to get official protection.
- **Get Legal Advice** – If someone copies your work, organizations like AKKA/LAA (Latvia) or OSA (Czech Republic) can help you claim your rights.

Why Copyright Matters for Young Creatives

- **Protect Your Work** – Make sure your creations are not used without permission.
- **Earn from Your Creations** – You can license, sell, or receive royalties from your work.
- **Avoid Legal Problems** – Using copyrighted material without permission can lead to fines or legal action.

By understanding copyright law, you can **protect your rights, respect others' work, and ensure fair treatment in the creative industry.** Whether work in **Latvia**, the **Czech Republic**, or anywhere in the EU, knowing how to **secure your work legally** is an essential skill for your career!

Dealing with Disputes and Legal Issues

In the creative industry, disputes and misunderstandings can arise – whether with clients, employers, or collaborators. Knowing how to handle conflicts professionally and understanding where to seek legal support can help protect your rights and reputation.

1. Conflict Resolution: How to Handle Disputes Professionally

Conflicts in the workplace or freelancing can happen for many reasons – late payments, disagreements over project scope, or unclear expectations. **The key is to resolve them calmly and professionally.**



Step-by-Step Conflict Resolution Strategy (Use these 5 steps to get best results)

Step 1: Stay Professional & Communicate Clearly

- If a dispute arises, remain calm and professional– avoid emotional responses.
- Clearly express the issue in writing (e.g., email) and propose a reasonable solution.
- Example: "I noticed that payment for my work is overdue. Could we discuss a timeline for settling this?"

Step 2: Refer to Your Contract or Agreement

- If you signed a contract, review the terms carefully to see what was agreed upon.
- If the other party does not follow the agreement, remind them politely of their obligations.

Step 3: Negotiate a Solution

- Offer a compromise where possible. If the problem is about revisions, workload, or deadlines, suggest alternative solutions that work for both sides.
- Example: "I understand you need additional changes, but they were not included in our original agreement. I would be happy to do them at an additional fee."

Step 4: Get Everything in Writing

- Always confirm any agreements in writing (email, signed documents, or messages).
- If you reach a resolution, ensure both parties clearly agree on the next steps.

Step 5: Seek Mediation or Legal Advice

- If the dispute cannot be resolved through communication, consider mediation – a neutral third party can help both sides find a fair solution.
- If necessary, consult a legal expert (see resources below).



2. Legal Resources: Where to Get Help?

If a dispute escalates, you do not have to handle it alone. Several resources can offer free or low-cost legal assistance to young professionals.

Latvia: Legal Support for Work & Freelancer Issues

- State Labor Inspectorate – For disputes with employers about unfair contracts, unpaid wages, or workplace rights.
www.vdi.gov.lv
- Latvian Chamber of Commerce & Industry (LTRK) – Helps freelancers and businesses navigate contract disputes.
www.ltrk.lv
- AKKA/LAA (Copyright Protection Organization) – Helps creatives protect their intellectual property and claim unpaid royalties.
www.akka-laa.lv
- Legal Aid Administration (Juridiskās palīdzības administrācija) – Offers free legal consultations for people who qualify for financial assistance.
www.jpa.gov.lv

Czech Republic: Legal Support for Work & Freelancer Issues

- State Labor Inspectorate (Státní inspekce práce) – For disputes with employers regarding unfair contracts, unpaid wages, workplace safety, and rights. They help ensure compliance with the Czech labour law.
www.suip.cz
- Czech Chamber of Commerce (Hospodářská komora České republiky) – Provides support to freelancers and businesses on navigating contract disputes, employment issues, and offers advice on legal matters related to business operations in the Czech Republic.
www.komora.cz
- OSA (Ochranný svaz autorský) – Protects the rights of authors, composers, and creators of music, literature, and other intellectual properties. They manage royalties and ensure creators are compensated for the use of their work.
www.osa.cz
- Legal Aid Service (Právní pomoc) – Provides free legal assistance to those who meet financial eligibility criteria. It is especially helpful for people who cannot afford to hire a lawyer.
www.mpsu.cz



Understanding Arbitration Courts

When dealing with legal disputes, many people think about state courts, but another option exists – arbitration courts.

In **Latvia**, arbitration is regulated by the Arbitration Law <https://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=269189> which establishes the rules for setting up and running arbitration courts.

In the **Czech Republic**, arbitration is regulated by Act No. 216/1994 Coll Czech Arbitration Act <https://www.zakonyprolidi.cz/cs/1994-216> Employment contracts cannot include a fixed arbitration clause, meaning an employee and employer can only agree to arbitration after a dispute happens, not in advance. This rule prevents employees from being forced into arbitration unfairly.

While arbitration can be a **faster and more flexible way to resolve conflicts**, young professionals **must be cautious** when agreeing to arbitration clauses in contracts.

What is Arbitration

Arbitration is a **private dispute resolution process** where a neutral third party (an arbitrator) makes a legally binding decision. Unlike regular state courts, arbitration:

- It is **faster** than traditional court proceedings.
- Allows **parties to choose** their arbitrators.
- Often it happens **privately**, without public records.

However, **arbitration is not always the best option**, especially for young creatives, freelancers, or employees who may not have legal expertise or financial resources to challenge unfair decisions.

Why Should Young Professionals Be Careful?

Although arbitration seems like a **quick solution** for resolving conflicts, it has serious risks, especially if included in employment or freelance contracts. Here is why:

- **Not Always Neutral** – In some cases, arbitrators may be biased toward the company that selected them. Unlike in state courts, there are limited options to appeal.
- **Expensive Fees** – Many arbitration courts require both parties to pay fees, which can be costly for young professionals. Even if you are in the right, you might have to pay for the process.
- **No Public Oversight** – Arbitration decisions are final and private. If something goes wrong, there is no public record or government authority overseeing the process.
- **Limited Right to Appeal** – Unlike in state courts, you cannot easily appeal an arbitration decision, even if it feels unfair.

Arbitration courts can be useful, but they are not always fair or affordable for young professionals. Always read contracts, understand your rights, and seek legal help before agreeing to arbitration. Protect yourself from hidden risks, and don't be afraid to negotiate fairer terms!



Empowerment Through Knowledge

Entering the creative industry as a young professional can be both exciting and challenging. Understanding your rights, responsibilities, and legal protections empowers you to make confident career decisions. Whether you start your first job, freelancing, or launching your own creative business, knowing how to protect your work, negotiate contracts, and resolve disputes will give you long-term success and stability.

Every step you take to educate yourself in work ethics, legal matters, and financial responsibilities helps you become a stronger professional. The more informed you are, the better prepared you will be to navigate opportunities, overcome challenges, and shape a career that aligns with your passions and goals.

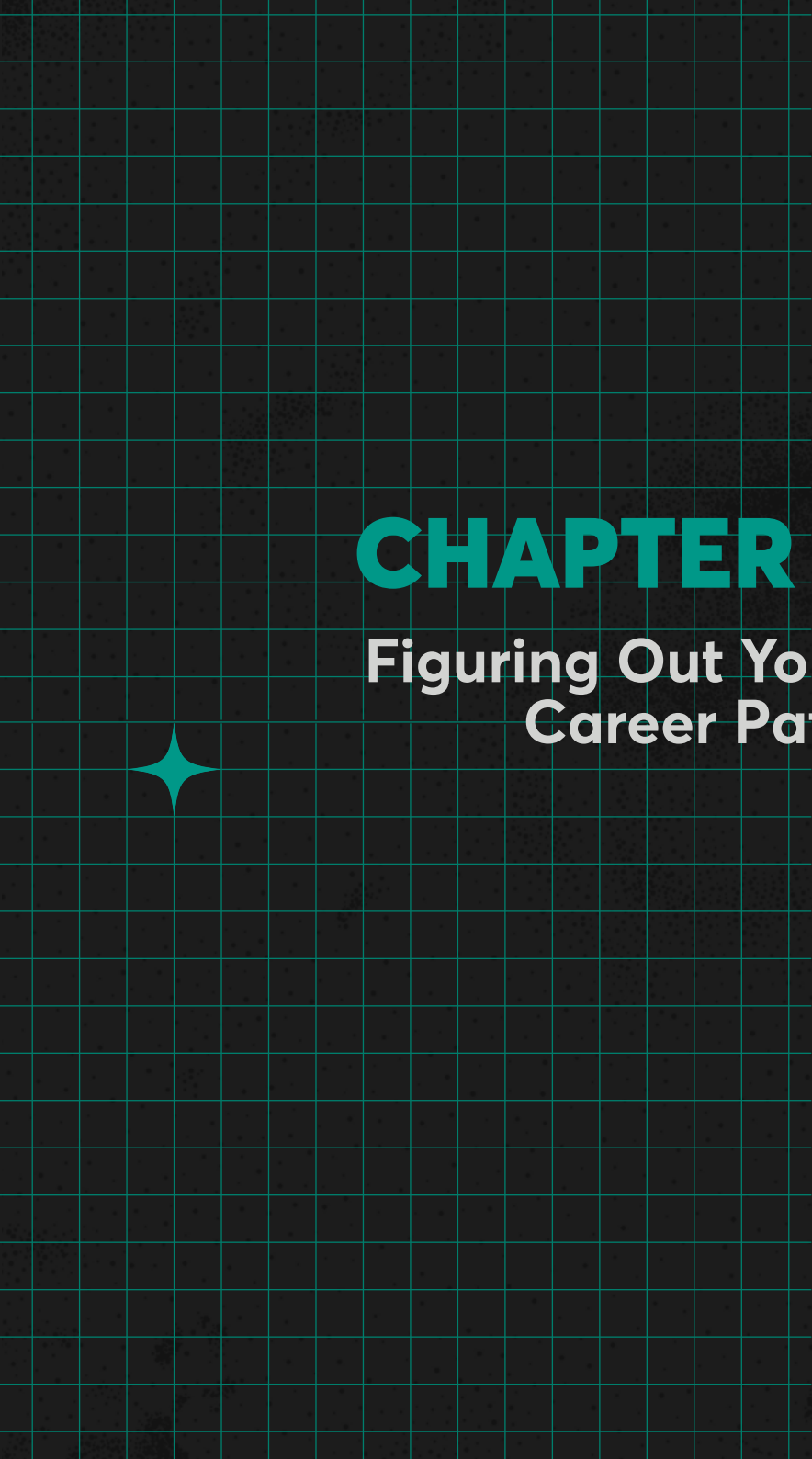
The world of work and the creative industry is constantly evolving – new laws, regulations, and industry trends emerge regularly. Staying informed will help you adapt, grow, and protect yourself in the ever-changing professional landscape.

Make Learning a Habit:

- Follow industry news, legal updates, and government resources.
- Attend workshops, legal seminars, and career development programs.
- Network with professionals who can offer advice and mentorship.

Your journey does not end
with this guide – it is
just the beginning.

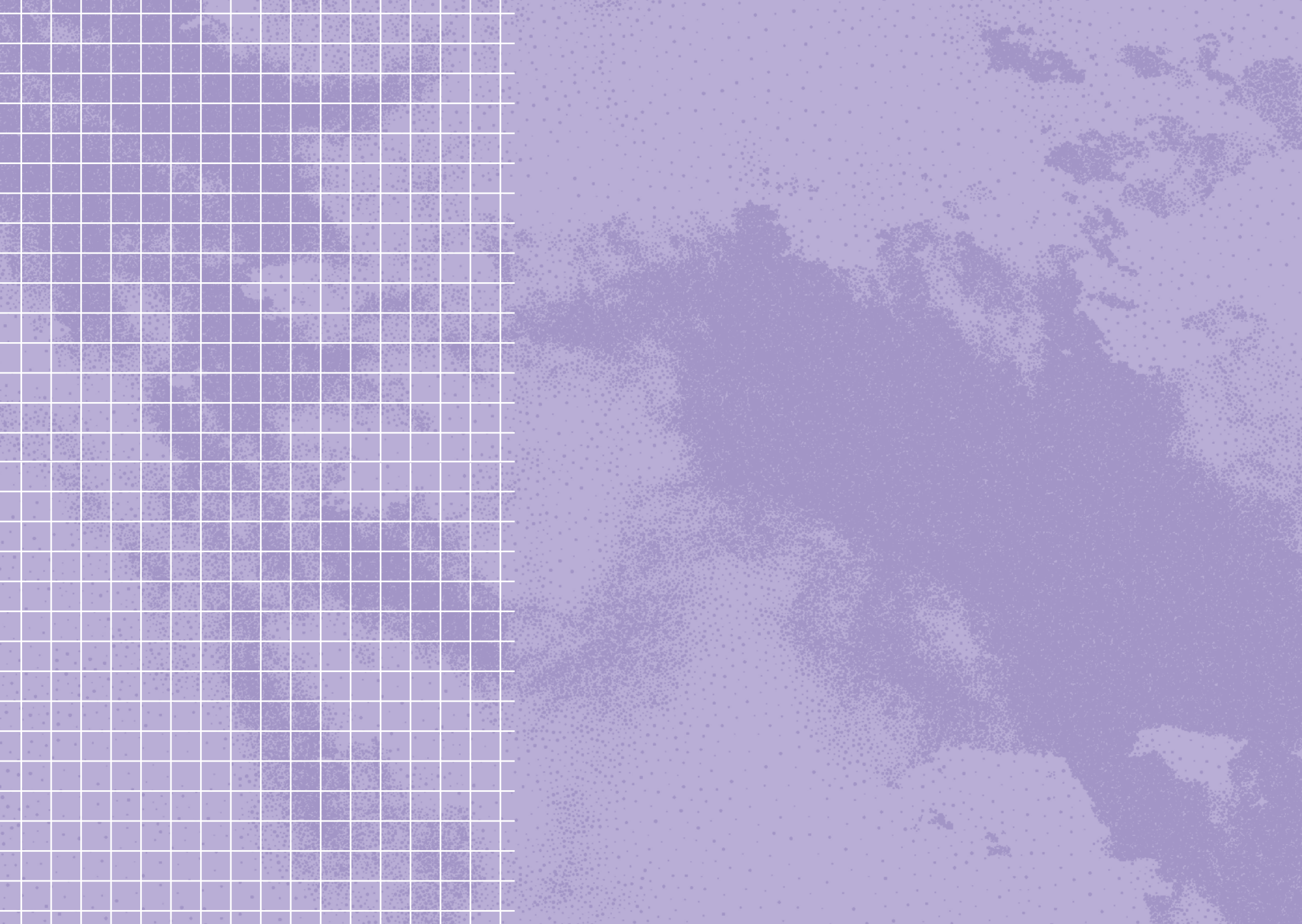
**Stay curious,
keep learning,
and take charge
of your career
with confidence!**



CHAPTER 3

Figuring Out Your Career Path





First Steps in Entrepreneurship

Now it is time to build something of your own. Whether you want to freelance, launch a brand, or start a studio, this chapter will help you take your first steps – from testing your ideas and managing money, to choosing the right business form and finding your audience.

Crafting Your Artistic Business

As a graduate of a secondary art school, you already have the tools to create – now it is time to build. Creativity is your strength, but how do you turn that into a livelihood?

Entrepreneurship is the bridge between artistic vision and real-world impact. It enables you to:

- **Work independently and make your own decisions**
- **Choose projects that align with your values**
- **Combine creativity with strategy and planning**
- **Shape a career that evolves with you**

This chapter is your starting line. You will explore what it means to think like an entrepreneur, why it is especially important for artists and designers today, and how this mindset can unlock new possibilities. The tools you need – confidence, planning, flexibility – start here.

Do not wait to be discovered – create your own opportunities.

The Entrepreneurial Mindset

Entrepreneurship is not just a job title – it is a way of thinking. For creatives, this mindset can be empowering and transformative. Instead of being dependent on institutions or employers, you learn to take control of your path.

Key features of the entrepreneurial mindset

Opportunity-seeking

You train your eye to spot gaps – what people need, want, or respond to. Is there a new niche in handmade fashion? Is there a local demand for custom murals? Entrepreneurs stay alert and curious.

Proactivity

You do not wait for perfect conditions. You take small steps, test ideas, and adjust. The more you act, the more you learn.

Resilience

You will face setbacks – a failed project, a client who does not pay, a quiet season. What matters is that you bounce back, reflect, and improve.

Creative pragmatism

You combine your artistic vision with practical thinking. How much will it cost to produce your collection? Can you partner with someone to share studio space? You do not lose your art – you support it with strategy.

Value creation

Entrepreneurs think not only about what they make, but about how it serves others. Your design may bring beauty, clarity, identity, or comfort – that is your value. Understanding it helps you communicate and sell.



Think like a creative problem solver

Ask yourself:

- What problem do I solve with this product or service?
- Who would benefit most from it?
- How can I make it easier to access or more appealing?

For example:

- You are a painter who creates emotional portraits.
- The problem you solve : helping people capture important relationships or memories.
- The opportunity: custom commissions, gift portraits, or collaborations with photographers.

Why Entrepreneurship Matters

In today's creative world, entrepreneurship is not optional – it is a core skill. Art and design graduates face a reality where:

- Traditional full-time jobs in creative fields are limited.
- Freelance and self-initiated projects are growing.
- Digital platforms allow direct access to clients and fans.

Entrepreneurship opens doors

Freedom

You choose the work you take, when you work, and how much. Want to work mornings and spend afternoons in the studio? Want to sell at a weekend market and design logos on weekdays? All of this is up to you.

Control

You define your values, style, and goals. No boss tells you what to create. If you want to combine activism with fashion or reuse materials in your products, you can build that into your brand.

Scalability

You can start small – a few clients, a basic website – and grow at your

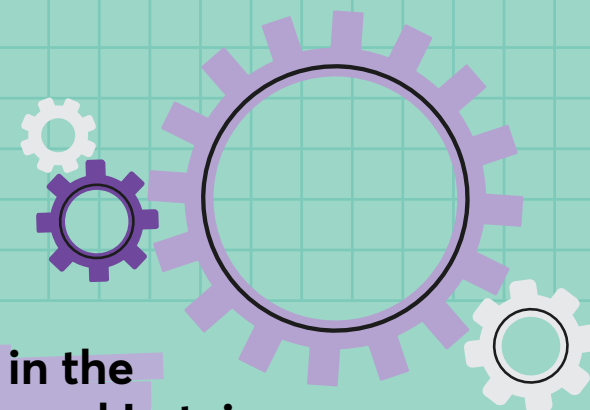
own pace. Later, you might open a physical space, teach workshops, or hire collaborators.

Visibility and Reach

With social media, online shops, and portfolio platforms, you can build an audience across the world. Many young creatives in Latvia and the Czech Republic sell their work abroad, often from their own homes.

Resilience

Freelancers and entrepreneurs often weather economic shifts better than those dependent on one employer. When you manage your income from several sources (clients, events, grants), you reduce your risk.



Why it matters in the Czech Republic and Latvia

In both countries, the creative industries are growing but are still under-supported. Many employers cannot offer full-time jobs to new graduates. This makes it essential to:

- know how to generate income independently
- understand how to market your unique style
- build connections with clients, peers, and institutions.

Local support for young entrepreneurs (grants, workshops, mentorships) exists, but is underused. By stepping into the entrepreneurial space, you position yourself to access these opportunities and shape the creative economy in your region. Entrepreneurship is not a fixed path – it is an evolving process. You will try, learn, adapt. You will make mistakes **and find better solutions. But every step is progress.**

To be an artist is to believe in your voice.

To be an entrepreneur is to believe, others will value it too.

From Idea to Business

Every great business starts with a great idea – but it takes planning and action to bring it to life!

Turning Creativity into Action

- Every artist, designer, or musician has ideas.
- Entrepreneurship means turning ideas into real projects or businesses that can grow, make an impact, and support your creative journey.
- This section will guide you step-by-step from idea to action!

How to Know If Your Idea Can Work?

Test your idea

What is Idea Validation? It is very useful to check if your idea is realistic, needed, and if people would actually

pay for it. Here are some short videos, that could help you to understand what it is and how to do it:

- YouTube (Idea Validation – Innovation Explained)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M7zuDBnMgPQ>
- YouTube (How to Validate Your New Product Idea)
<https://youtu.be/ILLaRkD3U88?si=8oCAzcVHUbQqDtu>

What is Idea Validation? It is very useful to check if your idea is realistic, needed, and if people would actually pay for it. Here are some short videos, that could help you to understand what it is and how to do it:

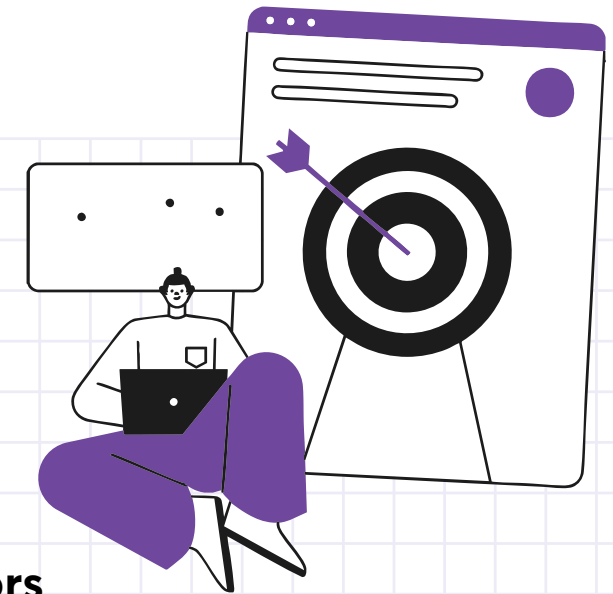
- YouTube (Idea Validation – Innovation Explained)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M7zuDBnMgPQ>
- YouTube (How to Validate Your New Product Idea)
<https://youtu.be/ILLaRkD3U88?si=8oCAzcVHUbQqDtu>

Steps to Validate Your Idea:

- Describe your idea simply (Can you explain your idea in one or two sentences?).
- Ask your target audience (friends, classmates, online communities): Would they want it? Would they pay for it?
- Look at similar products or services: Do other people do it? How can you do it better or differently?
- Prototype or sketch your idea (for design, art, music projects) and get early feedback.

Tip:

It is better to adjust and improve your idea now than later when you have invested time and money!



Understanding Your Audience and Competitors

What is Market Research?

Finding out who your customers are, what they want, and who else is offering similar things. Here is useful source to know more –

<https://www.askattest.com/blog/articles/market-research-for-a-startup>

How to do Basic Market Research:

- Identify your ideal customer: Who would love your art/design/music/service? (Age, interests, style)
- Find and analyse competitors: Check Instagram, Etsy, Behance, Spotify, YouTube – who else offers similar things?
- Ask potential customers: Use surveys (Google Forms, Instagram polls) to find out what people want.

Visualizing Your Idea

What is a Business Model Canvas?

A simple, one-page plan that explains how your business will work. Good for visual thinkers (artists, designers, musicians)!

Main Parts You Should Sketch Out:

- Who are your customers?
- What exactly are you offering? (product/service)
- How will you deliver it? (platforms, events, online shop)
- How will you earn money? (sales, commissions, subscriptions)
- What do you need to get started? (tools, materials, skills)
- What could be your biggest costs? (website, marketing, production)

Free Templates:

To build your first Business Model Canvas!

- Canvanizer
<https://canvanizer.com/>
- Strategyzer
<https://www.strategyzer.com/library/the-business-model-canvas>

Intellectual Property Basics

Why Protect Your Work? Your creations are valuable! You should protect your brand, logo, art, music, or designs, so that others do not use it for free (unless that was your original intention).

How to Protect Your Idea Early:

- Document your work process (photos, drafts, digital backups).
- Consider registering your brand/logo as a trademark if you start selling products.
- Learn about copyright protection (see 2nd chapter).

For more support:

- Latvia: Patent Office of the Republic of Latvia –
www.lrpv.gov.lv
(Check here more about intellectual property –
<https://www.lrpv.gov.lv/lu/kas-ir-intelektualais-ipasums>)
- Czech Republic: Industrial Property Office –
www.upv.cz



Starting Small and Testing Ideas

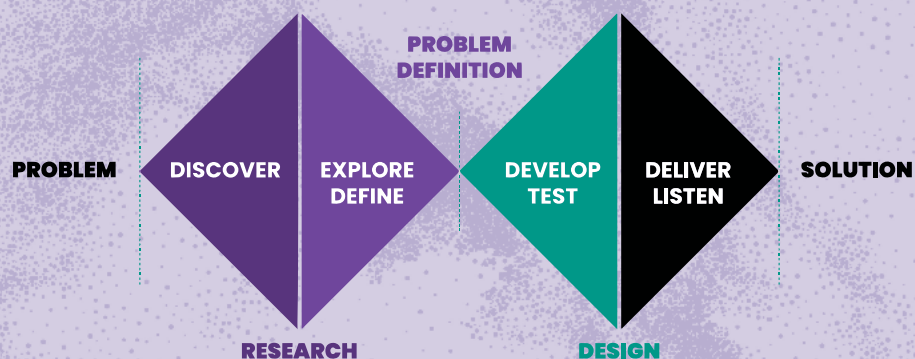
Start with a Mini-Project: Before opening a company, try selling or promoting one product, a few artworks, a first gig, or a design service. Test different styles, audiences, and prices.

Examples:

- Graphic designer? – Offer to design a poster for a local event.
- Artist? – Sell a few prints online via Etsy or Instagram.
- Musician? – Perform at open mics or publish a song on Spotify.

Goal:

Get early experience, feedback, and first success stories for your portfolio. Use the information you gain to develop your idea and strengthen your skills!



Design Thinking : Step-by-Step Process to Build Your Business Idea

What is Design Thinking?

Design Thinking is a way to solve problems and come up with new ideas by first understanding what people really need. It is used by designers, artists, and entrepreneurs everywhere – and it works great for young creatives like you!

Instead of guessing what people want, you do research, ask for feedback, and use creativity to make better products, services, or experiences.

Useful links:

- **What is design thinking?**
<https://www.lsm.lu/raksts/kultura/dizains-un-arhitektura/12.02.2025-uai-zinikas-ir-dizaina-domasana.a587451/> (in Latvian)
- **What is design thinking?**
<https://www.startdesign.lv/kas-ir-dizaina-domasana> (in Latvian)
- **What is design thinking?**
<https://skillmea.cz/blog/co-je-design-thinking> (in Czech)
- **What is design thinking?**
<https://www.flowii.com/cz/blog/proc-byste-meli-vyuzivat-metodu-designthinking/#:~:text=Design%20Thinking%20je%20p%C5%99%C3%ADstup%20zam%C4%9B%C5%99en%C3%BD%20na%20inovaci%20produkt%C5%AF%2C,a%20%C5%99e%C5%A1en%C3%AD%20prototypu%C3%A1n%C3%AD%20a%20neust%C3%A1l%C3%A9%20z%C3%ADsk%C3%A1u%C3%A1n%C3%AD%20zp%C4%9B%C3%A9%20vazby.> (in Czech)
- **What is design thinking?**
<https://www.interaction-design.org/literature/topics/design-thinking> (in English)
- **Design thinking handbook for developing your business ideas**
- **5 steps in the design thinking process**
<https://www.interaction-design.org/literature/article/5-stages-in-the-design-thinking-process>

Step by step from idea to business – how to do it

Step	What You Do	Why It Matters
Idea Validation	Test if your target audience likes your idea	Avoid wasting time/money
Market Research	Understand your customers and competition	Build a product that fits the market
Business Model Canvas/Design thinking 5 steps	Visualize how your idea becomes a business	See the big picture
Protect Your Idea	Secure your creations legally	Protect your rights and future earnings
Start Small	Test your idea with small projects	Learn, adjust, and grow stronger

Tools and Apps After Graduation

Gatavojies pārmaiņām!

Stay Prepared for Changes!

When you start your own business, freelance career, or creative startup, you **might lose free access to many tools and apps** that were **available** while you were a student **at school**.

What this means:

- No more free Microsoft 365 (Word, Excel, PowerPoint) unless you pay for it.
- No free design tools like Adobe Creative Cloud unless you purchase a subscription.
- No access to school-supported platforms or special student discounts.

What you should do:

- Download copies of important files, projects, and portfolios before you leave school.
- Research free or affordable alternatives for tools you'll still need (like Canva, GIMP, DaVinci Resolve, Blender etc.).
- Plan for software expenses in your first business budget – it is part of being a professional!

Tip:

Many platforms offer „young entrepreneur“ discounts or startup packages — do not hesitate to check special offers when you are setting up your business tools!

Legal and Financial Foundations

You already dived into **Chapter 2** about self-employment in creative industries. But what if you want to grow bigger, work with others, or protect your personal money from business risks? Then it is time to explore business structures – the legal forms you can use to register your creative venture.

What Is a Business Activity?

In both Latvia and the Czech Republic, a business means:

- You work independently (not as an employee)
- You take responsibility and risk
- You aim to make a profit
- You work professionally and regularly.

Whether you are a graphic designer, band, fashion label, or craft maker – your creative work becomes a business when you offer it to others for money, frequently and intentionally.



Business Forms – Explained Simply

The most common and useful business structures are **Self-employed** and **Limited liability company**. Both offer advantages, but some others come with extra paperwork, accounting, and sometimes higher costs.

Form	Whom	Pros	Cons
Self-employed (Pašnodarbinātais / OSVČ)	Solo creatives and freelancers	Simple, low-cost start	You are personally responsible for debts
Limited Liability Company (SIA / s.r.o.)	People ready to grow, hire, or attract partners	Personal savings are protected	More paperwork and accounting needed
General or Limited Partnership (Pilnsabiedrība / Komandītsabiedrība / v.o.s. / k.s.)	Two or more people starting together	Share costs and ideas	Trust is crucial; some partners risk more

Setting up a company might sound complicated, but it has some key benefits.

Why to start a Limited Liability Company?

- You want to **protect your personal savings**
- You want to work with **partners or investors**
- You want to build a **strong brand or studio**.

Limited Liability Company (SIA / s.r.o.)

What Is It?

A company owned by one or more people (or other companies).

Compared to being self-employed, **you only risk the money you put into the business, because a Limited liability company offers greater protection** of personal assets but **involves more** administrative responsibilities and costs.

Even though the minimum capital can be very low, you still need a :

- **realistic business plan**
- **cover running costs**
(like accounting, software, marketing, and taxes)

What are the basic characteristics ?

Aspect	Latvia (SIA) 	Czech Republic (s.r.o.) 
Legal basis	Commercial Law of Latvia	Section 132 of Act No. 90/2012 Coll.
Liability	Limited to the amount of share capital contributed means that shareholders are only responsible for the company's debts up to the money they invested – their personal assets are protected.	
Ownership	A limited company can be set up by one or several individuals or companies , and each shareholder owns a part (share) of the company, which entitles them to a portion of profits.	

Capital requirements	Minimum share capital is € 2 800 ; however, a reduced capital SIA can be established with € 1 , increasing gradually.	Mostly monetary. Minimum contribution is 1 CZK . This is the minimum amount an individual must contribute when starting the company.
Taxation	Corporate income tax: • 20% of the tax base • The tax base is taxed, which includes taxable objects: • distributed profit, • conditionally distributed profit. • When determining the taxable base for corporate income tax, the value of the taxable object is divided by a coefficient of 0.8. • Eligible to all SIA • Requires standard accounting and financial reporting	Double taxation: • 21% corporate income tax on profits (tax paid by the company itself). • Important: Double taxation can be difficult to manage without a tax adviser, as it involves both corporate and personal income tax returns. A tax adviser can help minimize tax liabilities and avoid legal issues.
Profit distribution	• The shareholder does not pay an additional personal income tax on dividends if they are a Latvian tax resident, because the distributed profit is considered already taxed with Corporate income tax at the company level. • for foreign shareholders, Latvia may apply withholding taxes (IIN) or tax treaty rule, but for local individuals, dividends are generally tax-free after Corporate income tax is paid.	• After the company pays its taxes, the shareholders pay 15% personal income tax on the dividends they receive from the company's profits.

Advantages	Protects personal assets. Affordable to set up. Suitable for growing businesses and attracting investors.	
Disadvantages	More complex setup and administrative requirements. Mandatory accounting and reporting obligations.	
Registration	Enterprise Register of the Republic of Latvia	Notary Chamber of the Czech Republic

Other Business Forms

While here we focus on the most common and practical options – like **self-employment** and Limited Liability Companies – there are **other legal forms** too, such as **Partnerships, and Joint Stock Companies**. **Do not worry** – right after graduation, you probably **will not need to use these complex forms**. **Just knowing they exist is enough for now**. When you get there, you should consult a local legal or business advisor.

Important Reminder

For any type of business, it is recommended to have:

- A tax adviser – assists with minimizing taxes and handling tax compliance.
- Accountant – helps ensure that financial transactions are properly recorded.



Licenses and Permits

In Latvia and the Czech Republic, the licenses you need to run a business depend on the type of business you start. Creative fields like art, design, or media may require different permits. Here is a general guide for both countries:

Limited Liability Company	Latvia 	Czech Republic 
Permits	For an SIA (Sabiedrība ar ierobežotu atbildību), you generally need to register your company with the Register of Enterprises of Latvia (Uzņēmumu reģistrs) and obtain a general business registration.	For an s.r.o., obtaining a trade license is generally required, along with registering your company with the Commercial Register (obchodní rejstřík).
Example	If you set up an SIA in a creative field like graphic design, visual arts, or music production, you typically do not need a specific license beyond the general registration.	If you set up an s.r.o. in a creative field like advertising, graphic design, or video production, you will need to apply for a free trade license (volná živnost).
Required licenses	Some activities (such as architecture, legal services, or regulated design professions) may require additional sector-specific licenses or certifications. For most general creative businesses, the general registration plus compliance with tax and accounting rules is sufficient.	Some fields (such as regulated professions like legal or accounting services) may require a regulated trade license, whereas many creative businesses will only need a general trade license.
Where to Register	Register of Enterprises of Latvia (Uzņēmumu reģistrs) State Revenue Service (VID)	Commercial Register (obchodní rejstřík) Trade Licensing Office

Specific Licenses and Permits for Creative Businesses

Depending on your specific creative industry (such as a design studio, a gallery, or a performing arts company), you may require additional licenses or permits. Before launching your business, especially if you do something beyond visual or applied arts, always check if your field requires a license. For details about self-employment see chapter 2.

Art and Design Business

Activity	Latvia 	Czech Republic 
Artist and Designer Studio	No specific license required beyond general business registration. VAT registration is mandatory if annual turnover exceeds €40,000.	No additional specific license is usually required apart from the standard trade license for self-employed persons. However, if you intend to sell artworks, you should be registered as a VAT payer if your annual turnover exceeds 2 000 000,- CZK.
Selling Artworks	Requires registration for retail activities. Additional permits may be needed for selling specific goods like alcohol or tobacco. VAT registration is mandatory if turnover exceeds €40,000	Requires a trade license under "Retail Trade" or "Sale of Goods". VAT registration is necessary if turnover exceeds the threshold.
Operating a gallery	Requires business registration and compliance with local municipal regulations. Additional permits needed if serving food or alcohol.	May require additional permits depending on activities (e.g. , serving alcohol). Must comply with local zoning laws and health regulations.

Media and Creative Industries (Film, Photography, Music)

• **Film Production** - Filming that involves disturbing the peace or takes more than 5 days requires a permit. Permits are issued by the National Film Centre.

• **Photography Services** requires business registration. Permits may be needed for public shoots or if using drones.

• **Music Production/Performance** - Requires business registration. Public performance licenses are needed from organizations like AKKA/LAA (Copyright and Communication Consulting Agency/Latvian Authors Association).

• **Broadcasting (TV/Radio)** - Requires a license from the National Electronic Mass Media Council.

• **Film production - Requires business registration.** Filming in public spaces that lasts more than **5 days** or **disrupts public order** needs a permit from the **National Film Office or local municipality.**

• **Photography Services Requires business registration.** If using **drones**, you must comply with **aviation regulations** and obtain permission from the **Civil Aviation Authority.**

• **Czech Radio and Television Broadcasting Council (RRTV):** Requires a license from the **Czech Radio and Television Broadcasting Council (RRTV).**

More info:
<https://rtv.gov.cz/cz/static/prehledy/prehled-zadosti-o-licenci-a-registraci.htm>

• **Music or Performance Licenses:** If you plan on hosting live events or performances, you might also need a **public performance license** from organizations like **OSA (Czech Copyright Protection Organization).**

OSA (Czech Music Copyright Protection): OSA website
<https://www.osa.cz/en/>

Selling Goods and Services

• **Retail Sales** (Physical Store) - Requires a trade license for retail activities. Special permits are needed for selling alcohol, tobacco, or other regulated products.

• **E-commerce** - Requires business registration and compliance with e-commerce regulations. VAT registration is mandatory if turnover exceeds €40,000.

• **Handmade Goods Sales** - Requires registration for retail activities. Additional permits may be needed for selling specific goods. VAT registration is mandatory if turnover exceeds €40,000.

• If your business involves selling products (such as arts and crafts), you must register for a **trade license**. This can be done at the **Trade Licensing Office**.

• **Selling art in galleries or online:** You will need a license under „Retail Trade“ or „Sale of Goods“.



Why is Budgeting Important?

- **Financial Control:** Know where your money goes.
- **Goal Setting:** Plan for business growth or special projects.
- **Profit Planning:** Make sure you stay profitable by matching income and expenses.

How to Create a Budget

Planning income and expenses helps **keep your business financially stable**.

1. **List Fixed costs:** Things you pay regularly (e.g. rent, software, internet, accounting services).
2. **List Variable costs:** Materials, marketing, transportation, project-specific costs.
3. **Set Aside a Reserve:** It is recommended to have at least 3 – 6 months of expenses set aside.
4. **List Expected Income:** Include all sources such as product sales, services, or project-based payments. (sales, services, grants, freelance gigs).
5. **Check the Balance:** Make sure your income covers all costs + reserve.

Planning Your Finances

Why Budgeting Matters for Creatives

Whether you are planning your first gallery show, preparing to launch a design line, or freelancing in music production, budgeting helps you stay in control, avoid surprises, and make sure your creative passion remains financially sustainable.

What is Budgeting?

Budgeting means creating a plan for how much money you expect to earn and how you will spend it. It helps you make sure you cover all costs, avoid overspending, and stay prepared for future needs.

Tools for Budgeting and Accounting

Czech Republic:

- **Fakturoid:**
<https://www.fakturoid.cz/>
An online invoicing and accounting tool designed for freelancers and small businesses. Offers features like automated invoicing, expense tracking, and financial reporting.
- **iDoklad:**
<https://www.idoklad.cz/>
A user-friendly online invoicing software widely used in the Czech Republic. Provides tools for creating and managing invoices, tracking expenses, and generating financial reports.

Latvia

- **PATS.LV:**
<https://pats.lv>
An accounting platform for entrepreneurs and self-employed individuals, offering features like invoicing and expense tracking. Includes functionalities such as report preparation, invoicing, and transaction accounting.
- **Standard Books by Excellent:**
<https://excellent.lv/en/home/>
Comprehensive business software suitable for small to medium-sized companies. Suitable for small to medium-sized companies, offering comprehensive business software solutions.
- **a2b.lv:**
<https://www.a2b.lv/lv/pakalpojumi/budzets-finansu-planosana>
online help in proper budget preparation, management, and financial control and monitoring.

Once you understand your costs, you can set fair prices for your products or services.

Pricing

Whether you sell handmade jewellery, offer design services, or produce music tracks, setting the right price is one of the hardest and most important parts of running a creative business. Your price needs to cover your costs, reflect your value, and keep your business sustainable.

Factors Influencing Pricing

Costs:

Includes materials, wages, tools and rent, utilities, software.

Supply and Demand:

Are people eager for what you offer? Higher demand may allow higher prices, while excess supply can lead to price reductions.

Competition:

What are others charging for similar work? Competitors' prices are often a primary benchmark.

Customer Value:

How much do your unique style, skills, or reputation add? If the product or service offers unique benefits, a higher price may be justified.

Target Market:

Do you sell to students or luxury collectors? Different markets may require different pricing strategies.

Examples of Pricing Strategies

Strategy	Description	Example Use Case
Low Price	Focus on affordability to attract many customers.	Basic version of a product. An illustrator offering basic digital portraits at entry-level rates.
Premium Price	Emphasizes exclusivity or luxury	Luxury goods. A designer selling limited-edition prints or high-end fashion pieces.
Hidden Price	Price not clearly stated (e.g. , services)	Consulting, advisory services. A musician offering custom soundtracks or a consultant setting hourly fees.

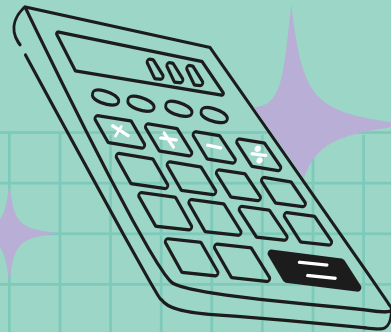
- For **freelancers** it is essential to combine methods – calculate your costs, check competitors, and test what customers are willing to pay.

How to Set the Optimal Price for Your Products and Services

Product pricing is closely linked to its life cycle in the market. This includes all phases of a product's existence – from launch to withdrawal. Each phase has its characteristics and suitable strategies for optimizing sales and profit.

Useful links

- **7 steps to setting the right price for your products or services**
<https://www.bdc.ca/en/articles-tools/marketing-sales-export/marketing/steps-setting-right-price-your-products-services>
- **How to Price a Product in 2025 (+ Pricing Calculator)**
<https://www.shopify.com/blog/how-to-price-your-product>



Product Life Cycle Phases

Products and services change over time. When launching something new, you may set a high price for early adopters or a low price to gain market share. As competition grows, you may adjust prices to stay competitive, and as demand declines, you might offer discounts or phase out the product.

1. Introduction to Market

Examples:

A new art collection launch; a debut musician's first album; a design studio entering the market

The product is new and unfamiliar. Requires marketing investment. Initial sales are low.

Pricing Strategy:

- Set a high price for early adopters (e.g., limited-edition signed artwork).
- Offer a low introductory price or free samples to build a following (e.g., discounted concert tickets for the first fans, free design templates online).

2. Growth

Examples:

- A musician gaining popularity with several singles on streaming platforms.
- A design studio expanding after early success with a popular product line.
- A photography business increasing its client base after word-of-mouth referrals.

Sales grow, marketing costs decrease, and product awareness increases.

Pricing Strategy:

- Maintain competitive pricing to support market share growth (e.g., setting rates similar to industry peers).
- Slight price decrease to attract a wider customer base (e.g., discounted package deals for design services or photo shoots).

3. Maturity

Examples:

- A well-known graphic designer or illustrator with a steady stream of client work.
- A fashion brand that has become established in the local or regional market.
- A music band with regular gigs and a stable fan base.

The product is well known, demand is steady, and competition is strong.

Pricing Strategy:

- Competitive pricing to keep the product attractive (e.g. , stay aligned with industry-standard freelance rates).
- Promotional offers to retain customer interest (e.g. , special offers for repeat design clients or early-bird ticket sales for long-time fans).

4. Decline, Saturation, or Renewal

Examples:

- A once-popular visual art style (e.g. , certain poster or t-shirt trends) fading in demand.
- A music genre that is no longer mainstream.
- A type of handcrafted item (e.g. , macramé, crochet) becoming oversaturated in local markets.

Sales decrease. The product may be updated or replaced.

Pricing Strategy:

- Lower prices to clear stock (e.g. , discounted art prints, end-of-season sales).
- Sales or discount campaigns (e.g. , remixes, redesigned products).

5. Discontinuation

Examples:

- Phasing out an old collection of artworks or designs.
- Stopping production of a physical album after moving to digital releases.
- Retiring an outdated photography package no longer in demand.

The product is outdated, demand falls, and customer preferences change.

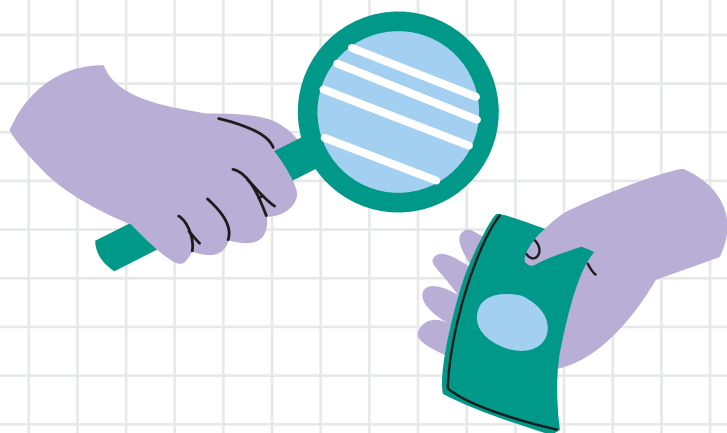
Strategy: Replace with a new product to protect brand image. (e.g. , launch a new fashion line, introduce a new music project, or revamp the art portfolio).

More info:

- Product Life Cycle (in Czech)
<https://www.pruvodcepodnikanim.cz/clanek/zivotni-cyklus-firmy/>
- Product life cycle + interactive game (in Latvian) –
<https://produkta-dzives-cikls.urda.lv/>
- Product life cycle (in Latvian) –
<https://rocketscience.lv/6-produkta-dzives-cikla-posmi/>

How to price your product?

Look at Market Rates	Explain the Value	Value Your Time
Check what similar creatives are charging: • Freelance.cz • NaVolneNoze.cz • Etsy, BigCartel, Shopify • Local, national creative markets. • Design studios. • Attend Networking events for Creatives. • Engage in conversations to find out other experiences. Compare – but price according to your unique value.	• What is included (edits, consultation, licensing) • Your process • Your experience and style This builds trust and understanding, especially with non-creative clients.	Working for "exposure" rarely leads to paid jobs. Instead: • Offer student discounts with clear limits. • Do pro bono projects that truly reflect your values. • Use free samples (e.g. , a preview sketch) to attract interest without giving away too much.



Costing Methods

Cost - Based Method	Value - Based Method	Competition - Oriented Pricing
Price = (Costs + Desired Profit) ÷ Number of Units/ Services • You spend 500 EUR on materials + 500 EUR worth of your labour. • You want 200 EUR profit. • You plan to sell 10 pieces. → Price per piece = (500 + 500 + 200) ÷ 10 = 120 EUR	Price based on the perceived value to the customer (common in art and creative work) • This is common in art, design, or music, where uniqueness, creativity, and reputation matter. • Example: A limited-edition art print may cost 20 EUR to produce, but if buyers see it as exclusive or prestigious, you might price it at 200 EUR.	Compare your price to others in the market, but avoid under-pricing yourself • Stay competitive, but do not underprice yourself just to win clients – it can hurt your long-term sustainability. • Example: If similar designers charge 50 EUR/hour, consider where your skills and reputation fit: slightly below, at, or above that rate.

Many successful creative entrepreneurs **combine these methods:**

- Use cost-based pricing to ensure you cover your expenses.
- Use value-based pricing when your work offers unique, high-value qualities.
- Check competitor rates to stay market-aware.

Managing Cash Flow: Ensuring Liquidity

Cash flow is the movement of money into and out of your business – it is the lifeblood of your creative practice. Managing cash flow means making sure you always have enough money to pay bills, invest in new projects, and cover emergencies. **Managing liquidity** means making sure a person or a business always **has enough money available** to pay for everyday things – like rent, bills, materials, or wages – when they are due.

Formula: Cash Flow = Revenues – Expenses

- **Positive Cash Flow:** If you have more revenues than expenses, you have positive cash flow – you can save or invest.
- **Negative Cash Flow:** If you have more expenses than revenues, you have negative cash flow – you risk not being able to pay your bills.

Mistakes to Avoid & Solutions

Confusing Profit with Cash Flow	Unpreparedness for Crises	Not Monitoring Customer Creditworthiness
Solution: Focus on actual revenues/ expenses, not accounting results	Solution: Create a financial reserve and regularly update plans.	Solution: Test the payment habits of partners before signing contracts.

Key Principles of Cash Flow Management

Monitoring Cash Flows

- **Operating Cash Flow:** Flows from core activities – product sales, payments for raw materials.
- **Investing Cash Flow:** Flows related to assets – purchasing machinery, selling real estate.
- **Financial Cash Flow:** Flows from financing – loans, dividends, stock issuance.

Planning and Forecasting

- Create a long-term plan that accounts for seasonal fluctuations and unforeseen costs.
- Set a payment schedule with priorities and establish a reserve for crisis situations (covering 3 –6 months of operating costs).

Managing Receivables and Payables

- **Shorten invoice payment terms** (e.g. offering discounts for quick payments) and actively collect debts to improve liquidity.
- **Extend payment terms** with suppliers to improve cash flow without damaging relationships.

Managing Inventory and Assets

- Monitor inventory turnover and sell unnecessary assets to release tied-up funds.

Cash flow is like playing a game with money – you need to know where it is coming from and where it is going to avoid running out.

Additional Tips

- **Engaging with galleries and institutions:** It is not just about building your own social media following – it is also really helpful to follow and interact with galleries and major art institutions that show and sell artwork. Staying connected and visible in these spaces can open doors over time.
- **Consistency matters:** Galleries often watch artists over a longer period – sometimes a year or two – to see if they are serious about their work. Being consistent and staying active helps show that you are in it for the long run, which can really make a difference.
- **Invoicing:** Track invoice due dates and send reminders.
- **Payments:** Set up regular payments so they do not strain cash flow.
- **Investments:** Decide when the right time is to expand the business.

Seeking Professional Help

If managing finances becomes overwhelming, consider consulting with professionals:

- **Accountant:** Handles day-to-day financial transactions and prepares financial statements.
- **Tax Adviser:** Provides specialized advice on tax laws, helping to minimize tax liability and ensure compliance with local regulations.

Branding and Marketing for Young Creative Entrepreneurs

When you start your business, freelance work, or creative project, it is not enough to just have a great product or service – **you need people to know about it!** Good branding and marketing help you stand out, attract customers, and build your professional image. Here is how to do it **step-by-step:**

1. Creating Your Brand

What is a Brand?

Your brand is much more than just a logo. It is the feeling and image people get when they see your name, hear your music, visit your website, or buy your product.

Here you can know more about different brands of

- Latvia – <https://latvijaradits.lv/> <https://designlatvia.com/lv>
- Czech – <https://www.czechtrade.cz> ; <https://www.uybrouseny-brand.cz/>

Key Elements of a Strong Brand:

- **Logo:** Your visual symbol – simple, unique, and memorable.
- **Colours:** Choose 2–4 main colours that represent your vibe (e.g. bright and energetic, calm and professional).
- **Fonts:** Use a few consistent fonts across your website, social media, and materials.

- **Message:** What story are you telling? Are you eco-friendly? Bold and rebellious? Artistic and thoughtful?
- **Tone of Voice:** How you speak to your audience – casual, friendly, formal, inspiring?

Check out video about how to create your brand a sound design – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h2uqujuC0ws>

Tip:

Before you start designing, ask yourself:

- Who do I want to reach?
- What emotions should my brand make people feel?

Free Tools to Build Your Brand:

Canva Brand Kit –

Create brand colours, logos, templates – <https://www.canva.com/>

Coolors –

Generate beautiful colour palettes – <https://coolors.co/>

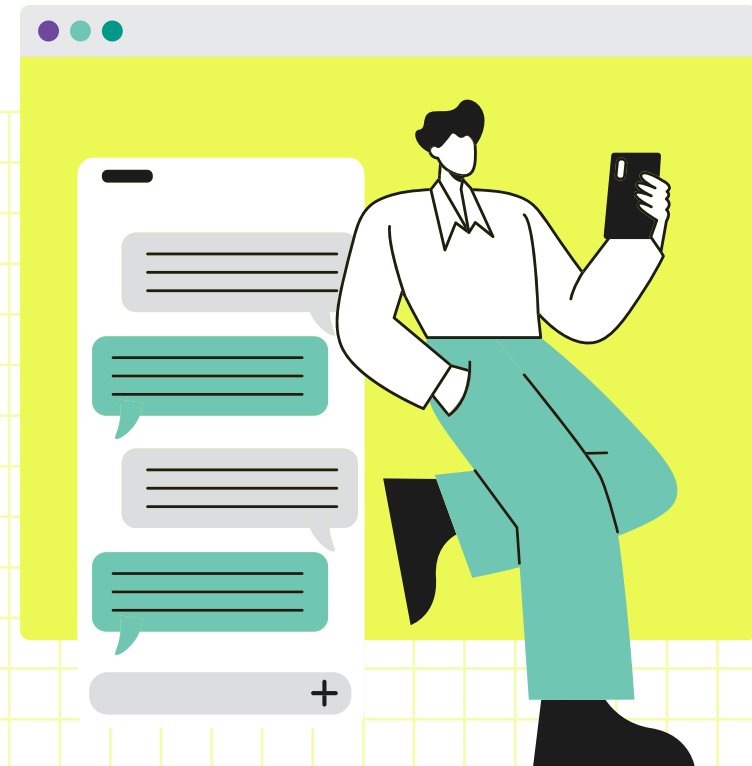
2. Building Your Digital Presence

Why is a Digital Presence Important?

In today's world, your first impression happens online – sometimes before you even meet someone face-to-face! If people cannot find you online, it is like you do not exist.

Essentials for a Good Digital Presence

- Professional Website
- Showcase your portfolio, products, or services.
- Include a simple „About Me“ page, project samples, and contact info.



Free website builders for beginners

- Google Sites for basic sites (without SEO) – <https://sites.google.com/>
- Yola for simple, basic websites – <https://www.yola.com/>
- Wix for an all-around site builder – <https://www.wix.com/>
- HubSpot resource for growing businesses and CMS (Content Management System) solutions – <https://www.hubspot.com/products/cms>
- Webflow for advanced designers – <https://webflow.com/>
- Webnode for the best AI features – <https://www.webnode.com/>
- Mozello for webpages with included services, for example payment system (Product of Latvia) – <https://www.mozello.com/>

Active Social Media Profiles

- Choose platforms where your audience hangs out (Instagram for artists, TikTok for musicians, LinkedIn for business creatives etc).
- Share updates, behind-the-scenes stories, new works, events.
- Keep profile pictures, bios, and branding consistent across platforms.

Build an Email List

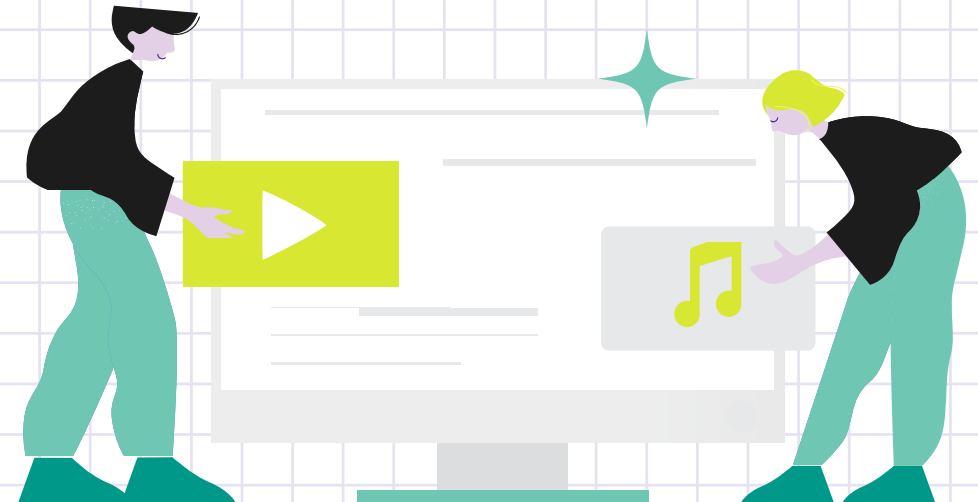
- Collect emails from fans, clients, and followers.
- Send regular updates, news, promotions, or special offers.

Free tools to start email lists

- Mailchimp – <https://mailchimp.com/>
- MailerLite – <https://www.mailerlite.com/>

Important:

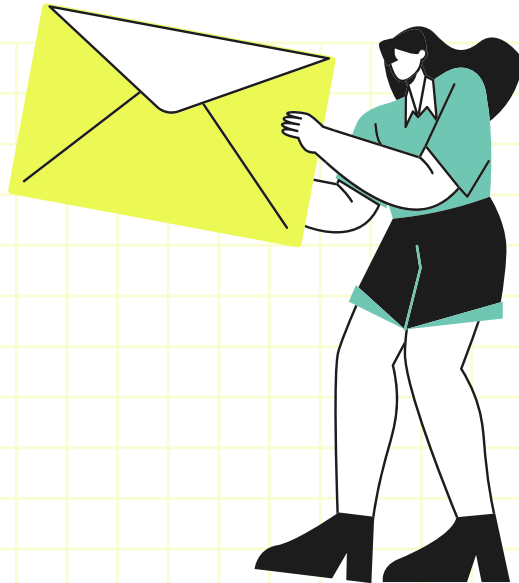
Do not rely only on social media! Platforms can change or disappear. Your website and email list are yours to control.



3. Content Marketing: How to Attract and Engage Your Audience

What is Content Marketing?

Content marketing means sharing valuable, interesting, and helpful content that attracts people to your brand without being pushy. Instead of shouting „buy my product,” you build trust by showing your skills, knowledge, and creativity.



Content Ideas for Creatives

- Share behind-the-scenes stories (e.g., how you create your art or songs).
- Write tips and advice related to your field (e.g., “How to style your home with local art”).
- Create mini tutorials (e.g., short videos showing how you design or paint).
- Post success stories from your clients, fans, or projects.
- Offer free resources (e.g., desktop wallpapers, downloadable templates).

Some Tools for Content Creation

Canva – For beautiful social media posts and marketing designs – <https://www.canva.com/>

CapCut – Free video editor (great for TikTok, Reels, YouTube Shorts) – <https://www.capcut.com/>

Buffer – To schedule social media posts easily – <https://buffer.com/>

Golden Rule: 80% valuable/fun content, 20% direct promotion.

(Example: 4 posts showing your process → 1 post offering your services.)

4. Bonus Tips: How to Stand Out with Your Branding and Marketing

- **Be Authentic:** Do not pretend. Be real about who you are and what you care about. People love honesty!
- **Find your niche:** Do not try to please everyone. Focus on your ideal audience.
- **Be Consistent:** Post regularly and keep the style similar – same colours, fonts, tone of voice.
- **Tell Your Story:** Your journey is part of your brand. Why did you start? What inspires you? People connect with stories, not just products. Engage with your customers. Build a community, not just a customer list.
- **Learn from Others:** Follow successful creatives you admire. Study how they present themselves online.
- **Analyse and Adapt:** Use free tools like Meta Business Suite (for Facebook and Instagram) to check what posts perform best, then do more of what works!
- **Do not mix brands:** If you work in very different styles or product lines, it is usually a good idea to keep them separate. For example, if you are known for making large ceramic vases but also create smaller, unrelated ceramic pieces, it can be clearer and more professional to present them under different brands or social media profiles. People (including galleries) tend to appreciate artists who focus on one thing and do it really well.

Useful Resources for Branding and Marketing

- Learn Branding for Free (Internet magazine about branding): <https://www.brandingmag.com/>
- Digital Marketing Tips for Creatives: <https://creativelivesinprogress.com/articles/how-to-promote-yourself-as-a-creative?section=What+do+we+mean+by+self-promotion%3F>
- How to Build a Website: <https://www.websitebuilderexpert.com/>

Branding and marketing are not just for big companies – they are your tools to tell your story, find your people, and grow your creative career. Start small, stay real, and be proud of what you create!



Sales and Customer Relationships

How to sell your art, build loyal customers, and price your work smartly

You do not need to become a "salesperson." You need to become a **storyteller, a listener, and a service-minded artist** who understands the value of your work.

Selling Your Creative Work

Clearly define your product or service. Do you offer:

- Physical goods (e.g., ceramic mugs, clothing, illustrations)?
- Digital products (e.g., animations, patterns, templates)?
- Services (e.g., branding, mural painting, photography)?
- Custom experiences (e.g., commissioned portraits, workshops)?

Be specific. Instead of "I'm a designer," say, "I create eco-friendly visual identities for local businesses."



Know Your Customer

Your potential customers could be:

- Individuals buying gifts or art for their home.
- Small businesses needing visual branding.
- Galleries, festivals, or public institutions commissioning work.
- Online shoppers looking for handmade or custom goods.

Research where these groups spend their time and how they buy. In Czech Republic and Latvia, many artists reach clients through:

- Local creative markets (e.g., Dyzajn Market Prague, Kalnciema Quarter Fair Riga, Riga Design Market)
- Online platforms (Fler.cz, Etsy, or Shopify)
- Social media (Instagram, TikTok, Facebook groups)
- Portfolio platforms (Behance, Dribbble)

Tell Your Story

People buy from people. Share:

- Why you make your art.
- Your process and materials.
- Your influences and values.

Tell your story in product descriptions, on your website, and through your posts and videos.



Where to Sell

- **Markets and shops:** local markets, art fairs, consignment in galleries or design shops.
- **Your website:** Use platforms like WordPress, Wix, or Tilda with e-commerce tools.
- **Social media:** Instagram shopping, Facebook marketplace, TikTok shop.
- **Online:**

Czech Republic:

www.fler.cz

<https://www.molo7.cz/>

Latvia :

AndeleMandele <https://www.andelemandele.lv/>

Latvijas pārles <https://www.latvijasperles.lv/>

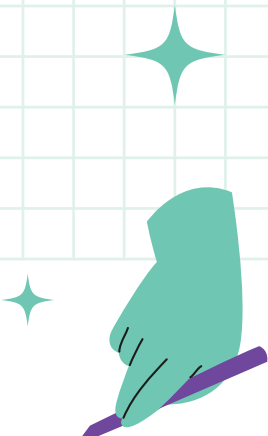
Riija <https://riija.lv/>

M50 <https://m50.lv/>

Global: Etsy, BigCartel, Shopify

Converting to a Sale

- **Make it easy to buy** clear product details, photos, prices, and shipping. Tell your audience exactly what to do next: "Buy now," "Message me to order," or "Click here to shop." Don not leave them guessing.
- **Use limited editions** or bonuses to create urgency. Highlight numbers like "200 sold," "Back in stock by demand," or "Only 3 left!"
- **Offer multiple payment methods** (bank transfer, card, etc.).
- **Create Trust** - add reviews, testimonials, or customer photos. People trust other buyers more than advertising.
- **Optimize for Mobile** -make sure your website or store works well on smartphones – most people shop from their phones.
- **Always follow up** with a thank-you note or small bonus – a personal touch matters!



Customer Relationship Management (CRM)

Good customer relationships are the key to long-term success. Many artists get most of their work through repeat customers and referrals. **Customer Relationship Management** means taking care of the people who buy your work or support your creative business – and staying in touch with them so they will come back again or tell others about you.

Think of it like this:

- Would you rather buy from a stranger or someone who remembers your name, your style, and thanks you for your support?
- Most people choose the second!

Why does CRM matter for young creatives?

- A happy customer might buy from you again.
- They could recommend you to friends or post about you online.
- It is easier and cheaper to keep a good customer than to find a new one.

Start with Respect and Trust

- Deliver what you promise – on time and at the agreed quality.
- Be honest about what is and is not possible.
- Use contracts or written agreements for services.

Communicate Professionally and Personally

- Use polite (even friendly), clear, and timely communication (email, chat, or call).
- Confirm details before starting custom work.
- If things go wrong, explain honestly and offer solutions.
- Send holiday greetings or thank-you messages.
- Offer repeat buyers discounts or early access to new pieces.
- Use newsletters (Mailchimp, TinyLetter) to share new work or upcoming events.
- Customer loyalty is built slowly – with consistency and care.

CRM is a tool (usually software) that helps you:

- Organize and save client information
- Track projects, orders, or commissions
- Remember who you have contacted with and when
- Plan follow-ups, newsletters, or offers - share updates with your customers (new products, exhibitions etc.)
- See what your clients love the most - ask for feedback!

Instead of losing client messages in your inbox or forgetting who ordered what – a CRM keeps everything in one place and helps you stay professional. Even if you are a one-person business!

Do not forget – treat your customers like friends, a part of community, not just as a sale!

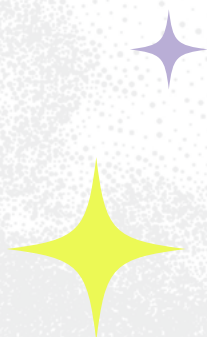
People buy connection, not just a product!

In business culture, **politeness, clarity, and reliability** are highly valued.

Useful CRM Tools

Using any of these tools, even at a basic level, can strengthen your customer relationships by making sure you stay responsive, professional, and engaged over time.

- Free: Google Sheets, Notion, Trello -help you manually track client details, project progress, and follow-up tasks in an organized way.
- Advanced: Hubspot (free plan), Zoho CRM, MailerLite – offer automated features – such as sending email campaigns, tracking client interactions, and managing sales pipelines.



Scaling and Growth

You have taken the first steps: you have started your business, reached your first clients, and gained confidence. Now, how do you grow from small-scale projects to something more sustainable – or even something bigger?

Scaling Your Business

Scaling means taking your creative venture to the next level – expanding your capacity, offering more, or serving new markets. Growth does not mean becoming a large company overnight. For many creatives, it means gaining more stability, freedom, and income.

Common ways to scale as a creative

- **Expanding your product or service line** (e.g., adding prints, workshops, or digital products).
- **Reaching new markets** (selling internationally or targeting different age groups).
- **Hiring part-time help** (e.g., a virtual assistant, social media manager, or technician).
- **Creating passive income streams** (e.g., selling online courses, digital downloads, art licensing).
- **Investing in better tools or systems** (for production, marketing, or finance).

When is the right time to scale?

Ask yourself:

- Am I turning away clients or overworking?
- Have I built a solid foundation and brand identity?
- Have I had a stable income for several months in a row?
- Can I delegate or automate parts of my business?

Scaling should **free up your time and increase impact**, not cause burnout.

Collaborations and Partnerships

Collaboration is a powerful (and often free) way to grow your reach and improve your offerings. In the creative industries, trust and shared vision matter more than size or status.

Examples of valuable collaborations:

- **Joint collections:** A fashion designer and illustrator co-create a capsule line.
- **Event sharing:** Multiple artists share a booth or organise a shared exhibition.
- **Cross-promotion:** You promote each other's work to different audiences.
- **Creative exchange:** One provides branding, another provides photography.

How to find collaborators

- Local art markets and festivals.
- Design schools and alumni networks.
- Online platforms (Behance, Instagram, local Facebook groups).
- Creative hubs and incubators.

How to find collaborators

- Local art markets and festivals.
- Design schools and alumni networks.
- Online platforms (Behance, Instagram, local Facebook groups).
- Creative hubs and incubators.



Trusted Latvian & Czech Platforms for Collaboration

- <https://startin.lv/>
– creative startup community in Latvia
- <https://www.startuphouse.lv/>
– space for co-creation and prototyping in Riga
- <https://labsoflatvia.com/en/news/latvian-startup-ecosystem-organisations-incubators-and-more>
– database of Latvian startup ecosystem
- <https://www.umprum.cz/>
– Academy of Arts, Architecture and Design in Prague
- <https://www.czechdesign.cz/>
– Czech platform for collaboration and design projects
- <https://www.startupjobs.cz/>
– Czech startup platform
- <https://www.cbnet.com/>
Creative Business Network – European-level network for creative entrepreneurs



Measuring Success

As your business grows, you will need more than intuition to guide your decisions. That is where **KPIs** (Key Performance Indicators) come in – measurable data points that show if your business is healthy.

Common KPIs for creative entrepreneurs

- **Monthly income and profit.**
- **Client retention rate** (how many come back or refer others).
- **Social media engagement** (follows, shares, direct messages).
- **Website traffic** and inquiries from potential customers.
- **Time spent on each task or project.**
- **Inventory turnover** (for product-based creatives).
- **Number of completed commissions or sales per month.**

Tips

- Use spreadsheets, Notion, or tools like Wave, Fakturoid, or Google Analytics.
- Set simple monthly goals: "Reach 10 new clients," or "Post 3 times per week."
- Reflect quarterly:
What worked?
What did not?
What can I improve?



Embracing Creativity and Business Savvy

Many young artists worry that focusing on money and strategy will ruin their creativity. In reality, creativity thrives when it is supported by smart systems and planning.

A strong creative business gives you:

- **Freedom to experiment** with materials and ideas.
- **Resources** to invest in better tools or spaces.
- **Time** to develop new work.
- **Confidence** to say no to unfavourable offers.

Think of entrepreneurship as a design problem: how do you create a structure that supports your vision?

Many successful Czech and Latvian creators are blending **art, tech, and social values** – from sustainable design to digital storytelling.

Continuous Learning

The creative world is constantly changing. To stay relevant, you need to keep learning – about tools, platforms, trends, and customer behaviour.

How to stay updated:

- Take free or low-cost online courses (Coursera, Skillshare, YouTube, CreativeLive).
- Subscribe to industry newsletters or blogs (Dezeen, Creative Boom, Czechdesign.cz), online communities (Facebook groups, Slack channels).
- Attend local exhibitions, festivals, and meetups.

Continuous Learning = Future Proofing

By investing in your growth, you will be ready for shifts in:

- Technology (AI, VR, digital art).
- Platforms (new tools and ways to sell).
- Consumer needs (e.g., ethical fashion, mental wellness, sustainability).

Creativity Is a Business Superpower

Being an artist, designer, or maker is not just a job – it is a mindset. You see things others do not. You express ideas, shape culture, and tell stories. Entrepreneurship allows you to do all of that **on your own terms**.

Scaling your business is not about becoming huge. It is about growing wisely – so your work can reach the people who need it, and your career can support the life you want.

Whether you choose to stay small and independent or grow a team, your **artistic identity is your brand** – and your greatest asset. Build something that only you can offer the world.



Useful Resources

Latvia LV	Czech Republic CZ
Business Registration and Development	
• Register of Enterprises of Latvia – official business registration and company information https://www.ur.gov.lv • Register of Enterprises – Licensing overview https://www.ur.gov.lv/lu/registre/uznemumu-uai-komersantu/sia/dibinasana/licences • Business.gov.lv – national platform offering resources for entrepreneurs at all stages https://business.gov.lv • Investment and Development Agency of Latvia (LIAA) – support for business start-ups, innovation, incubation, and export https://www.liaa.gov.lv/lu • Startin.LV – Latvia's startup association and community supporting creative entrepreneurship https://startin.lv • ALTUM – Latvian Development Finance Institution – state funding, loans, and business development programs https://www.altum.lv	• Czech Commercial Register – official company registration and legal information https://or.justice.cz/ias/ui/rejstrik • Trade Licensing Office – register a trade license online for freelancers or companies https://ministerstvo.cz/zivnostensky-list-online-rychle-jednoduse-a-bez-zbytecných-prutahu • Set Up a Limited Liability Company (s.r.o.) – detailed instructions and support https://zaloztesro.cz/zalozeni-s-r-o • Pruvodce podnikáním – step-by-step business start-up and management guide (in Czech) https://www.pruvodcepodnikanim.cz • Official Administration Portal – citizen services and business-related procedures https://obcan.portal.gov.cz • Czech Creative Industries Agency (CzechInvest) – support for business innovation and creative sector development https://www.czechinvest.org • Creative Business Cup Czech Republic – international competition and support for creative startups https://www.creativebusinesscup.cz

Finance, Tax, and Legal Framework

- State Revenue Service (VID) – tax information for individuals and businesses, including VAT, personal income tax, and social contributions
<https://www.vid.gov.lv>
- Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Latvia – guidance on budget planning and financial legislation
<https://www.fm.gov.lv>
- Commercial Law of Latvia – legal framework for businesses and company structures
<https://likumi.lv/ta/id/5490-komerclikums>
- Financial Management Guidebook (in Latvian) – practical resource on financial literacy (€45.89)
<https://www.dbhub.lv/finansu-vaadibas-rokasgramata>
- Isolta.lv – simple invoicing tool for freelancers and small business owners
<https://www.isolta.lv>
- Czech Financial Administration – guidance on VAT, pricing, budgeting, and business taxes
<https://financnisprava.gov.cz>
- Ministry of Finance of the Czech Republic – official financial legislation and budget guidance
<https://www.mfcr.cz>
- VAT Registration Information – how to register for VAT (in Czech)
<https://financnisprava.gov.cz/cs/dane/dane/dan-z-pridane-hodnoty/registrace-dph>
- Business Corporations Act (Act No. 90/2012 Coll.) – legal framework for business entities in the Czech Republic
<https://www.zakonyprolidi.cz/cs/2012-90>
- Financial Management Guide – practical tips for managing business finances (in Czech)
<https://www.pruvodcepodnikanim.cz/clanek/financni-rizeni-dil-1>
- Pricing for Freelancers (in Czech) – how to set your rates
<https://www.pruvodcepodnikanim.cz/clanek/cenotvorba-pro-osvc-ugrobek>
- Fakturoid.cz – invoicing platform tailored for Czech freelancers and small businesses
<https://www.fakturoid.cz>

Creative Industry Networks and Communities

- Creativity Lab (CLAB) – centre for creative innovation, workshops, and entrepreneurship
<https://www.creativitylab.lv/home>
- Latvian Performers' and Producers' Association (LaIPA) – rights protection and support for music professionals
<https://www.laipa.org>
- Latvian Centre for Contemporary Art (LCCA) – exhibitions, events, and support for visual artists
<https://lcca.lv>
- Latvian Designers' Society – design industry events, professional development, and community updates
<https://www.design.lv>
- Art Academy of Latvia – public lectures, continuing education, and creative education opportunities
<https://www.lma.lv>
- Latvian National Commission for UNESCO – support for cultural education and UNESCO Creative Cities
<https://unesco.lv>
- Czech Association of Creatives (SVČR) – network and advocacy for creative professionals
<https://art-sucr.cz>
- Czech Association of Designers – professional support, events, and community
<http://www.designers.cz>
- Association of Designers (Asociace designerů) – Czech-based design industry network
<https://www.asociacedesigneru.cz>
- Czech Film and Television Academy (ČFTA) – support and visibility for film professionals
<https://www.filmovaakademie.cz>
- Czech Music Fund – funding and support for music professionals
<https://www.hudebnifond.cz>

Consumer Protection and Legal Access

- Consumer Rights Protection Centre (PTAC) – e-commerce regulations and consumer protection advice
<https://www.ptac.gov.lv>
- Likumi.lv – official portal for Latvian legislation (including copyright, labour law, tax law)
<https://likumi.lv>

Freelancer Tools and Information Platforms

- NaVolneNoze.cz – Czech freelance platform with job listings, pricing advice, and resources
<https://www.navolnenoze.cz>
- Podnikatel.cz – practical business news and growth tips (e.g., expanding your business)
<https://www.podnikatel.cz>
- BusinessInfo.cz – government-run site with legal, administrative, and practical advice for entrepreneurs
<https://www.businessinfo.cz>

CHAPTER 4

Inspirational part



Inspirational part

Inspirational part consists of inspirational lectures that are part of the guidebook. All of them are recorded and available on [youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com). Here you can find links to the lectures and brief information about the guest lecturers and some inspiring quotes.

Sebastian Hols (Netherlands)

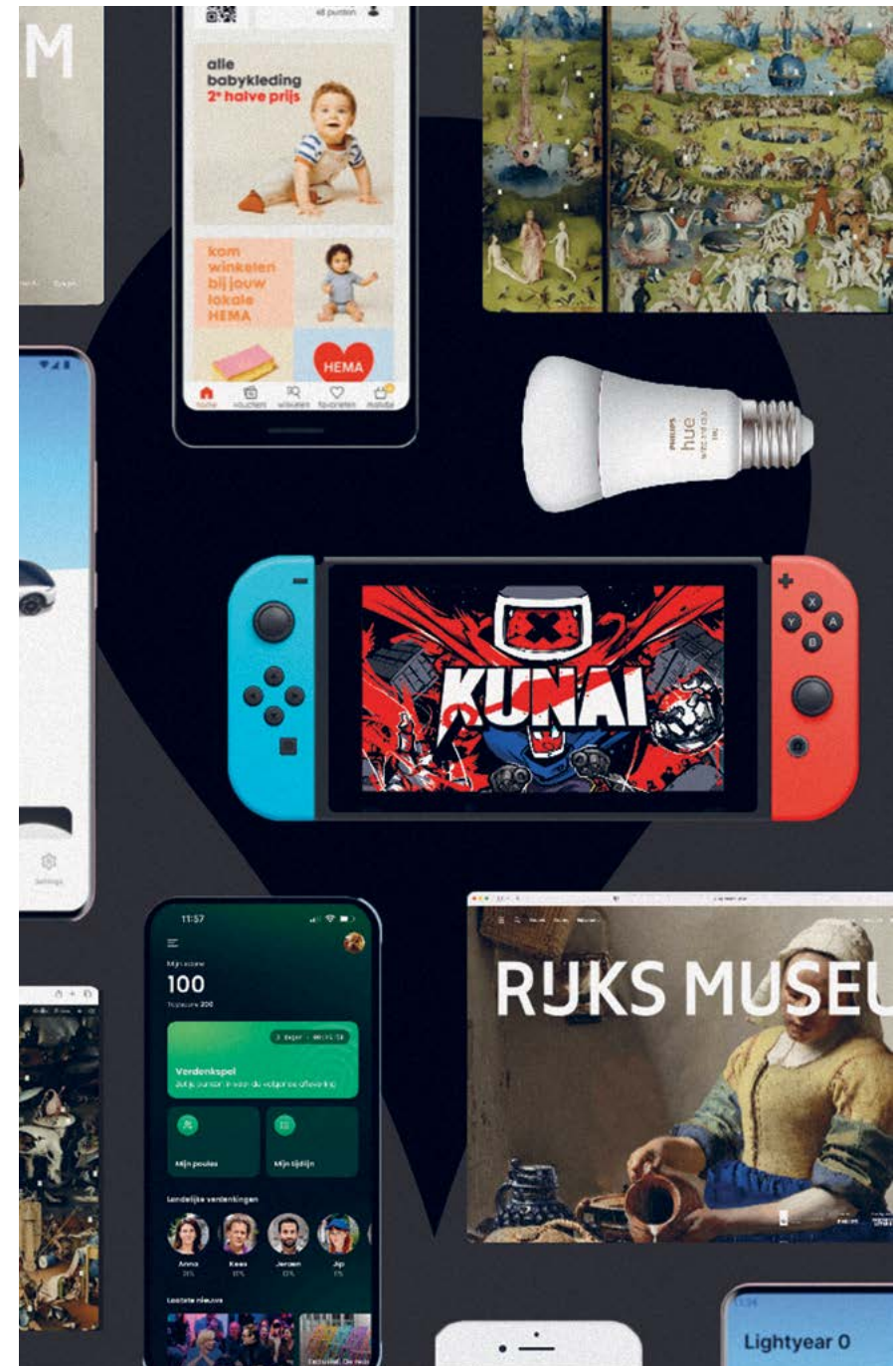
Sebastian is a social software engineer and creative technology specialist working at Q42, where he develops innovative digital solutions that blend programming and art. He has collaborated with cultural and state institutions on interactive applications and multimedia projects. During his lecture at Liepāja Music, Art and Design High School, he explored how creative coding enables unique digital experiences and shared insights into studying and working in the Netherlands' creative tech sector.

Web:

<https://www.q42.nl/en/>

Lecture video:

<https://youtu.be/LwaB6n8uAlk?si=8zJfZMeEjnzO8ObC>



Sarmīte Poļakova

(Latvia/Germany)

Studio Sarmīte is a Latvian materials design and research studio led by designer Sarmīte Poļakova. The studio focuses on transforming industrial waste into circular design concepts that challenge traditional production and consumption. Through hands-on, experimental processes, Studio Sarmīte explores the intersection of material, art, science, and design — working on both bespoke and client projects for brands such as Adidas, Vitra, Levi's, and others.

„Practical tips from my side for everyone who wants to develop their skill: go through school and experience. The thing is that you can already start becoming more engaged and also to shape your personality and skill. I would really say go the extra mile always. We all have deadlines. You have multiple subjects to work at school and there's it's so easy to be like, ah, I'll not do this. But do it, do the extra work. Take the harder route because this will really always pay off at the time. In the end, you're not doing it only for the grade of your particular subject. You're doing it for you, for the future, you.”



Web:

<https://studiosarmite.com/>

Lecture video:

<https://youtu.be/SwqywmtIH8EC>

Laima Jurča

(Latvia)

Laima Jurča is a Latvian fashion designer, lecturer and researcher whose work focuses on sustainable design, innovative materials and responsible fashion production. She has represented Latvia in several international design projects and exhibitions. Her creative approach combines aesthetics, ethics and functionality, exploring how fashion can respond to global environmental and social challenges. Through her teaching and creative practice, Laima promotes sustainability as a core design principle and inspires young designers to rethink the future of fashion.



Instagram:

<https://www.instagram.com/laimajurca/>

Lecture video:

<https://youtu.be/xKfF6ejbKQA?si=K75zjE5xVO95RwZr>



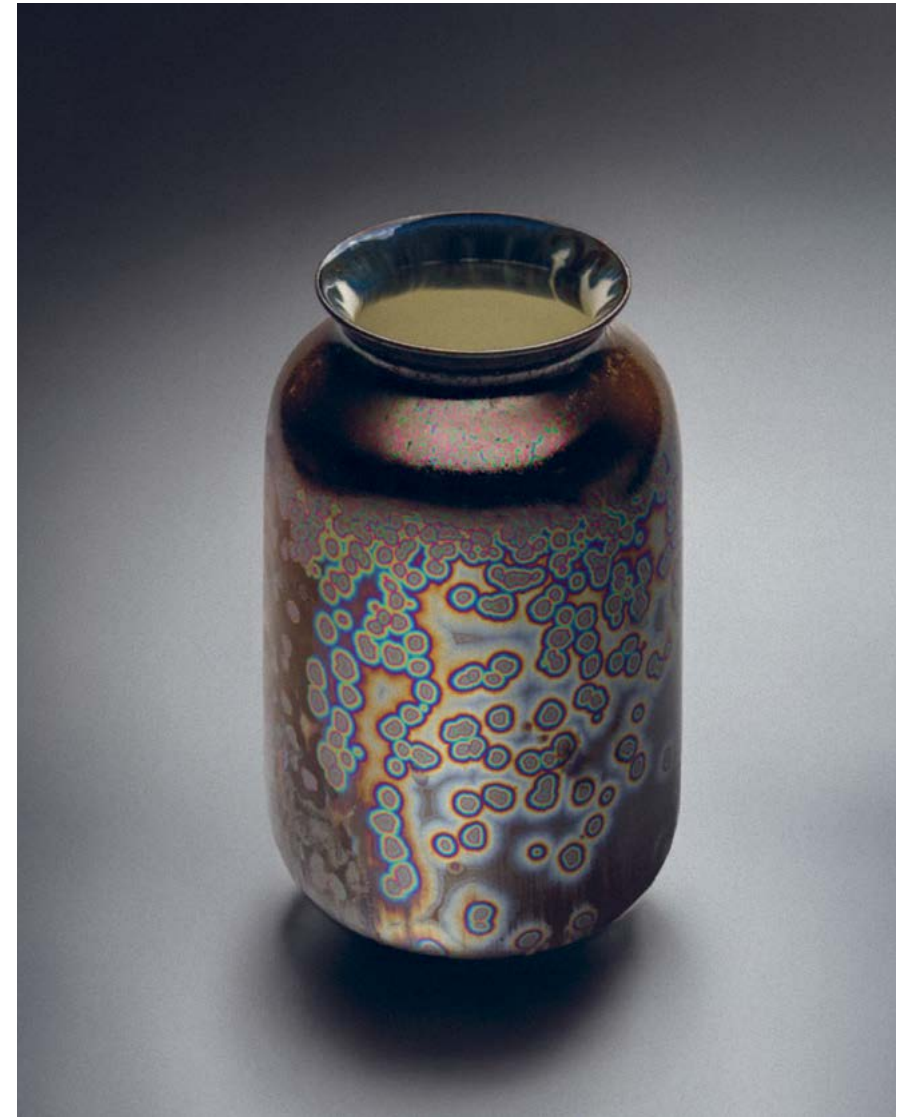
Milan Pekař

(Czech Republic)

Milan Pekař is a renowned Czech ceramic artist and educator specializing in porcelain and experimental glaze development. He currently works as an assistant professor and head of the Applied Arts Department at the Academy of Arts, Architecture and Design in Prague, where he also studied ceramics and porcelain. Milan founded his own studio in 2009, where he focuses on mould-making, slip casting, and innovative surface techniques, particularly crystalline glazes that have become his signature. Milan has exhibited across Europe and Asia, including the Milan Design Week, Saatchi Gallery (London), and Clayarch Museum (South Korea). He has been recognized at the Czech Grand Design Awards and has work in major museum collections in Prague, Dresden, and Leipzig.

During his inspirational talk, Milan spoke about his journey from a student at the Secondary School of Applied Arts in Uherské Hradiště to becoming an internationally exhibited ceramic artist. He shared insights into creative process, the importance of technical experimentation, and how to maintain authenticity in artistic practice. His presentation encouraged young artists to be patient with their development and open to unexpected discoveries through material.

"The material will always speak back to you—learn to listen, and your work will become a dialogue, not a monologue. Focus on the process, do not have a vision of the final result."



Web:

www.milanpekar.com

Lecture video:

<https://youtu.be/iRINn9FT8r0?si=rduWD2NMRuRwwwlV>

Richard Vodička (Czech Republic)

Richard Vodička serves as a Curator and Design Outreach & Public Engagement Specialist at Studio 519, a Czech design studio renowned for its collaboration with brands under the mmcit+ and Egoé umbrellas. Studio 519 partners with these companies to develop functional and aesthetically enduring products for urban and outdoor environments. Richard advocates for sustainable design, emphasizing the importance of quality materials and craftsmanship to ensure longevity and minimize environmental impact. His team's contributions have been recognized with prestigious awards, including the Red Dot Design Award and the Red Dot Best of the Best, reflecting their ongoing commitment to excellence in design.

"Graduates of industrial design should stay humble and not pursue fame. What truly matters is a genuine passion for the craft, the ability to set aside one's ego, and to collaborate as part of a team."



Web:

<https://www.mmcite.com/en>
<https://www.instagram.com/mmcite/>
<https://www.egoe-studio.eu/en/>

Lecture video:

<https://youtu.be/MIGfZ8X3yaY?si=yLZ8dy7X-Fu3gp4A>

Marie Absolónová (Czech Republic)

Marie Absolónová is a master shoemaker whose work blends traditional craftsmanship with modern design. Her journey into shoemaking began with a passion for both artistry and functionality, transforming leather into footwear that is not only durable but also uniquely expressive. Through her meticulous attention to detail and commitment to quality, Marie has become a respected figure in the world of artisanal footwear.

"One of the most magical parts of creating something — is how mistakes turn into breakthroughs, spontaneous decisions shape the final result, and by the time you reach the finish line, it looks nothing like what you started with."



Web:

<http://www.marieabsolonova.com/>

<https://www.instagram.com/marieabsolonova/>

Lecture video:

https://youtu.be/hYALWJ8CskE?si=dD5Ncx75NAW_sq_1

AI Tools for Creative Careers

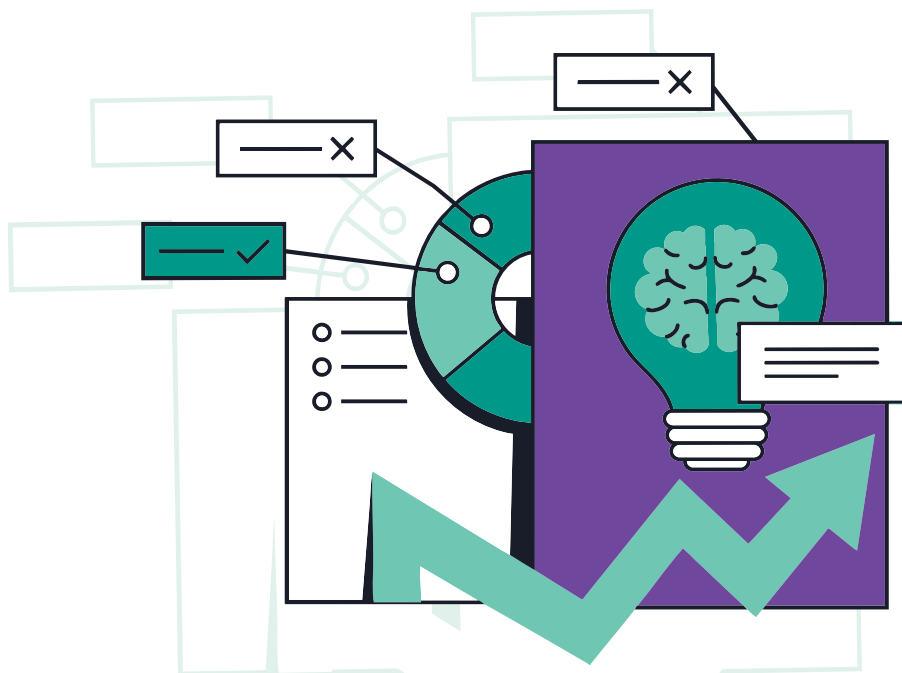
REMEMBER

You're not alone. You've got this guidebook – and you've got powerful AI (Artificial intellect) tools that can help you plan, create, and move forward.

IMPORTANT

Use AI as a tool to help you learn, improve and get better, not to do and plan instead of you!

AI can support you in the same areas this guidebook covers: career choices, portfolio building, job search, entrepreneurship, branding, and productivity. Think of AI as a creative assistant you can talk anytime to brainstorm, improve drafts, practice interviews, organize projects, and even generate visuals or video concepts.



A quick map of AI tool types

AI language models (text + thinking helpers)

These are best for writing, planning, learning, ideation, and problem-solving:

ChatGPT (OpenAI) – a conversational assistant that can help with writing, planning, and multimodal work (text + images).
<https://chatgpt.com/>

Gemini (Google) – an AI assistant for writing, brainstorming, and planning (especially useful if you live inside Google tools).
<https://gemini.google.com/>

Claude (Anthropic) – strong for clear explanations, writing drafts, and working with longer texts.
<https://claude.ai/>

Microsoft Copilot – useful for productivity workflows and everyday help (especially if you use Microsoft tools).
<https://copilot.microsoft.com/>

Perplexity – great for research with sources, when you want answers backed by citations.
<https://www.perplexity.ai/>

AI visual creation tools (images + design exploration)

These tools are best for moodboards, concept art, branding drafts, layouts, and visual experiments:

Midjourney – popular for high-quality image generation (note: it's subscription-based; privacy options depend on plan).
<https://www.midjourney.com/>

Also consider tools built into platforms you already use (e.g., design suites and editors) for quick assets and mockups.

AI video creation tools (video + motion concepts)

Useful for storyboards, promo clips, music visuals, social media content ideas, some examples:

Sora (OpenAI) – text-to-video generation via the Sora app.

Veo (Google) – video generation available through Gemini (access depends on plan/region).

How AI helps in the exact situations your guidebook covers

Career guidance and decisions

Use AI to:

- identify your strengths (skills + interests + values) and turn them into possible paths
- explore roles you've never heard of (creative technologist, UX writer, sound designer, exhibition producer, etc.)
- compare "work vs. study next" options and build a realistic plan

Try prompts like:

"I'm finishing vocational school in music/art/design. Ask me 10 questions to understand my strengths, then suggest 5 realistic career directions in Latvia/EU."

"Based on my interests (____), list roles and typical entry-level tasks + what portfolio pieces employers expect."

Portfolio building

Use AI to:

- write short project descriptions (what you did + tools + process + result)
- create clean case-study structure (problem → process → outcome)
- generate alternative headlines, captions, and "about me" versions
- prepare an English version of your portfolio text



Try prompts like:

"Here are 3 projects. Turn them into portfolio case studies in 150–250 words each, focused on process and results."

"Rewrite my artist statement in 3 tones: professional, warm, bold."

Job search and interviews

Use AI to:

- tailor your CV to a job ad
- prepare interview answers (especially for creative roles)
- practice common questions and get feedback
- draft emails to companies even when there's no published vacancy

Try prompts like:

"Here is a job ad + my CV. Suggest improvements and write a tailored motivation letter."

"Run a mock interview for a junior designer/sound tech role. After each answer, give feedback."

Entrepreneurship and branding

Use AI to:

- test your idea (who is the customer, what problem you solve, why you're different)
- write your brand message (one-liner, bio, elevator pitch)
- plan a content strategy (what to post for 30 days)
- draft simple contracts/emails/invoices (then you review carefully)

Try prompts like:

"Help me build a brand identity: target audience, brand values, tone of voice, and 10 tagline ideas."

"Create a simple 30-day content plan for Instagram/TikTok for a young creative brand in Latvia."

Visual + video tools for creative communication

Use image/video AI to:

- generate moodboards for a brand identity
- test color + style directions quickly
- prototype poster concepts, album-cover ideas, or scene/storyboard options
- create short promo video concepts for events, exhibitions, performances

Reminder:

AI visuals are amazing for concepting, but you still need your creative judgment (and often your own final design work) to make it truly "you."

A smart "start kit" for students (free-first mindset)

- Start with a text AI assistant (planning, writing, learning). Many have free access options; Google also highlights free ways to start using Gemini tooling.
- Use research tools with citations when accuracy matters, like Perplexity AI (e.g., rules, requirements, legal basics).
- Use image/video AI mainly for exploration and early drafts; decide later if you need paid tools for quality or speed. (Midjourney, for example, is paid plan based.)

How to use AI responsibly (especially for creative work)

- Don't upload private client data or sensitive documents unless you're sure it's allowed.
- Fact-check important info (especially legal, taxes, admissions).
- Respect copyright and licensing: AI can help you create, but you still must use assets legally and avoid copying someone's protected work.
- Be transparent when needed (e.g., if a client asks whether visuals are AI-generated).

**Good luck
on your journey!**



Co-funded by
the European Union



This guidebook is created within Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union, Key Action 2 (KA2), Small-Scale Partnerships in the field of Vocational Education and Training, project "EmpowerED: Fostering Employability, Cultural Understanding, and Digital Resilience in VET Education" No. 2023-2-LV01-KA210-VET-000178458 Project Implemented from 1.04.2024. till 31.03.2026. by coordinator MIKC "Liepājas Mūzikas, mākslas un dizaina vidusskola" (Latvia) and project partner Střední umělecko průmyslová škola Uherské Hradiště (Czech Republic), total project budget is 60 000 euro. Funded by the European Union.

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and The State Education Development Agency (SEDA; VIAA in Latvian) Neither the European Union nor SEDA can be held responsible for them.

Content - Nils Kuncītis, Iveta Heinacka, Inga Kuncīte, Kristīne Liepa-Prese, Arturs Plotnieks, Marta Šišáková, Pavlina Presová, Martina Dočekalová

Proofread in English – Solvita Matvejeva, Marta Šišáková

Proofread in Latvian - Māris Kūlis

Proofread in Czech - Věra Gabrhelíková, Pavlína Presová

Design concept – Zane Kornhubere

Layout – Zane Kornhubere, Jan Křemének, Tomáš Brhel

Illustrations – Zane Kornhubere

Video recording and editing – Kārlis Volkovskis, Rostislav Štefánek

© Liepājas Mūzikas, mākslas un dizaina vidusskola, Liepāja 2026

© Střední umělecko průmyslová škola Uherské Hradiště, 2026

For the purposes of text editing, paraphrasing, and audience-oriented adaptation, the language model ChatGPT (OpenAI) was used during the preparation of this publication.
