

PROFESSIONALLY NAVIGATING COVID-19

A guide for 2020 Graduates

MARYLAND
INSTITUTE
COLLEGE
OF ART

JOSEPH MEYERHOFF CENTER FOR

**CAREER
DEVELOPMENT**

WE ARE CREATIVES

NOW IS OUR TIME TO GET CREATIVE

Being creatives means we see the world differently. We each approach problems from an entirely different angle than anyone else. The world is facing a unique set of problems. We have the opportunity to provide a unique set of answers.

BUT ALSO TO TAKE CARE OF OURSELVES

Things are chaotic. Take the time to take a step back, breathe, and make sure you're ok. You might be feeling external pressure to be extra productive during unexpected downtime - but doing extra work at the expense of your own wellbeing isn't worth it.

COVID-19 has impacted the entire global community and everyone is handling it in their own way. If you are looking to spend this time at home strengthening your professional network, building your portfolio, finding a job, or are just trying to manage to work from home - this guide is for you.

MICA CAREER DEVELOPMENT IS HERE FOR YOU!

MICA students have access to the Career Development office for life. This means even after you graduate you can still meet with any of our Career Advisors about your career-based needs.

You can book an appointment with one of our counselors [**here**](#).

Or you can view any of our online resources at [**www.mica.edu/career-development/**](http://www.mica.edu/career-development/)

WORK FROM HOME TIPS & TRICKS

ESTABLISHING A ROUTINE



Working on your own schedule, but it can also make it easy to slip into relaxed behavior. To combat this - try to wake up and go to bed on a consistent schedule or schedule yourself to work from 9 am to 5 pm (or 10-6) - leaving the evenings for leisure time.



Try to find something that puts you in a “work” mindset.

For example: if you enjoy spending your morning commute planning your day, try taking 30 minutes before working to go over your tasks at hand. If your morning coffee run is integral to starting your day right, try creating your own at home coffee ritual.

The key is to find something that makes you feel ready to conquer the day and incorporate it into your routine.

MASTERING VIDEO CALLS



Recently almost everyone has transitioned into using video conferencing as their main form of “face to face” communication. Being able to effectively use these tools will be important in maintaining a professional presence.



If you are asked to use a video conferencing platform that you’re not familiar with try to familiarize yourself with it beforehand. Some platforms will give you the option to “test audio and video” in settings. Take advantage of this and to make sure you can be seen and heard clearly.

You can also ask a friend to do a test call with you. Try performing the same tasks with your friend that you may be asked to do during the video call like sharing your screen or playing a video.



When in large group meetings it is common courtesy to mute your mic when not speaking. Find the keyboard shortcut to mute/unmute yourself quickly to eliminate long pauses due to fumbling for the right button. In Zoom - holding the space bar will temporarily unmute you so you can easily contribute to the conversation.



A bad Wifi connection can happen to the best of us. If you anticipate not having a reliable connection ask the other participants if a voice-only call would be acceptable. Often streaming video can slow down a connection. If all parties have their video off - it can improve the overall quality of the connection.

You can also look at our Virtual Engagement Guide [here](#). This guide goes over best practices for a successful video call.

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

In the age of online exhibition spaces, being able to write clearly and effectively about your ideas is more important now than ever. Here are a few tips to get you started.

INSIDE YOUR NETWORK



Digital communication has been a part of the workplace for some time now - but more people working from home means more emails. If you feel like your emailing skills could use a bit of help, you can find our Nettiquite Guide [here](#) and our guide Sending Professional Emails [here](#).

OUTSIDE YOUR NETWORK



Storytelling can be an extremely useful tool to illustrate a message. When telling someone about your work think about their perspective. If you were hearing your message for the first, third, or hundredth time what parts might you find engaging? Where are they on that scale? Cater how you tell your story to their perspective.

A well-written artist statement can be influential in creating a clear window for views to observe your work from. To get started, take a look at our Artist Statement And Bio guide [here](#) as well as [this](#) podcast on Developing Your Artist Statement from the College Art Association.



That being said - you don't want to compromise your message based on your audience. Try writing down what you feel are your three most important points or biggest concepts. When crafting your message make sure to include those three points no matter who you are talking to.



If your message is something you're trying to promote, consider crafting an elevator pitch. Take the three points you just wrote down and organize them into a concise one to two sentence statement. You can now use this statement to briefly explain your concept to others who may be interested in learning more.



If you are communicating with a potential employer take a look at our Mastering The Interview Guide [here](#) and our Confidence Guide [here](#).

I SUDDENLY HAVE MORE DOWNTIME?

First - take care of yourself. If you wish to continue working on your professional self here are some ways to start.

NETWORKING



With many people working from home, now is a great time to start conversations with others working in the fields or roles that interest you. Try reaching out to artists you admire or MICA grads at your favorite companies. Our Career Chats Virtual Workshop covers how to use LinkedIn to build your community and can be found, along with the full Career Chats series, in the MICAnetwork Resource Library.



Now more than ever professionals are willing to have conversations with 2020 grads so don't be afraid to reach out! The worst that can happen is they say no.

Talking to people you admire can be intimidating. To help you get started, check out our Professional Emailing Guide [here](#), our Networking Guide [here](#), and our Informal Interviews Guide [here](#).

POLISH YOUR PORTFOLIO



Now is a great time to spend implementing those suggestions that your professor gave you in the final critique a year and a half ago. If you have projects you want to revisit or just want to give your portfolio a refresh - go for it!



If you're looking to re-document your work take a look at our videos on Documenting 2-D [here](#) and Documenting 3-D Work [here](#).

If you're looking to refresh your PDF Portfolio take a look at our PDF Portfolio Guide [here](#).

UPDATE YOUR PROFESSIONAL PACKAGE



Update (or build) your website! Refresh your resume! Rework your business card! We have a ton of online resources for developing your professional package. You can check out the full list [here](#).

Our most popular ones are the Building Your Resume Guide which can be found [here](#), the Cover Letter Guide which can be found [here](#). We recommend catering each resume and cover letter you submit to be customized to that employer. To save time it can be helpful to create a standard format to follow for both documents.



If you are looking to work on your business card check out our Business And Artist Cards Guide [here](#) or our Guide To Printing Promotional Leave Behinds [here](#).

For personalized advice, make an appointment with one of our Career Counselors [here](#).

JOB SEARCH INSPIRATION



If you are looking to apply to jobs but are feeling down, check out these videos featuring MICA Alumni and their post-graduation experience finding a job [here](#) and maintaining their practice [here](#).

WHAT PROFESSIONALS ARE SAYING

Hint: they're just as unsure as you are. We asked creative professionals some of the biggest questions we've been getting lately. Here are their answers and advice.

ARE EMPLOYERS STILL HIRING?

CREATIVE'S ADVICE: In all honesty, it is a mixed bag. Yes, some employers have frozen new hiring processes. But plenty of other places are still hiring with the mindset that an average onboarding process may take up to four months - so starting application processes now means that the new team member won't be starting till September. This gives companies enough time to adjust their workflow and be prepared for new employees.

OUR ADVICE: Stay diligent. Fewer open positions mean that you're going to have to go the extra mile to land that interview. We have full confidence that our MICA graduates are more than able to create exemplary work. If you have questions about how to get started job searching, our Career Counselors are here to give you personalized advice. Make an appointment [here](#).

I'M NOW WORKING REMOTELY FOR MY INTERNSHIP. HOW CAN I GET THE MOST OUT OF THIS EXPERIENCE?

CREATIVE'S ADVICE: This is a tough one, but it's extremely relevant in today's climate. Internships are about learning as a student but also breathing life into a workplace with new ideas. Make sure you are staying in close communication with your supervisor so you can do both regularly. Dare to ask questions! Be curious! Working in proximity with other creatives gives you the opportunity to observe their process and time management methods which are important aspects of maintaining a professional practice. Ask questions not only of your supervisor but also of your colleagues. See how they are doing and learn from them.

OUR ADVICE: Asking questions is a smart thing to do in any learning situation. When completing an internship remotely - this is even more applicable. Because you can not directly observe your coworkers, be proactive in asking them about their workflow and creative practice. For more advice, check out our COVID-19 FAQs [here](#).

IS THE ROLE OF THE CREATIVE IN THE WORKPLACE GOING TO CHANGE POST COVID-19?

CREATIVE'S ADVICE: Covid-19 is going to change how the professional world works even after its gone. It might be too early to say exactly how the role of the creative is going to change but it is fair to predict that each workplace is going to adapt differently.

We can expect a higher demand for creative solutions to the novel problems that are going to grow and evolve as this takes its course. New technologies will accommodate new solutions for a changing world. The creative role of being a 'problem solver' can be reclaimed but with that comes more responsibility to create well thought out and meaningful solutions.

We can also look out for more collaboration between interdisciplinary teams as remote working becomes part of the workplace norm.

OUR ADVICE: As artists and creatives being adaptable has always been a part of the job description. Don't be afraid to try a new job that is outside of your comfort zone - you could find a new passion in your work! Or you could absolutely hate it and that's called growth.

HOW DO I KEEP CREATING WITHOUT ACCESS TO THE MATERIALS I USE TO DO SO?

CREATIVE'S ADVICE: Your greatest resource is your creativity. Everything else that you use to create is just a tool. See how creative you can get with the things that you have in your home.

Any time spent learning a new skill is not wasted. Getting back into drawing with paper and pencil or giving knitting a shot are equally valuable methods of creating. Try something new or revive an old 'pre-art school' skill.

OUR ADVICE: Graduating seniors lose access to their school's resources every May. Ask some of your 19', 18' grad friends what they did post-graduation. Many graduates find access to more expensive equipment or software through their employer. Given that open positions may be more competitive, consider using alternative skills to create supplementary material for the work that you really want to highlight. For example: write about the concepts behind your sculptures or revisit that storyboard that you weren't quite happy with.

ADVICE FROM CREATIVES FOR CREATIVES.

CREATIVE'S ADVICE: Keep doing. Read books about people and concepts in your field. Cultivate new ideas. Make new work - no matter if you think its good or not. Have fun and be experimental.

Find someone who you can trust to hold you accountable for the work that you do during this time. If they have a similar working rhythm as you, consider talking through the day to check in on each other. If you are feeling uninspired try writing prompts for each other.

It's an added bonus if this is someone you can also confide in about stress, anxiety, or anything else that sometimes hinders your work. Remember to breathe, relax, and take care of your personal wellbeing during this time.

OUR ADVICE: Please remember to take care of yourself. If you feel ready to continue creating - go for it! Work on your professional portfolio but also create for yourself. The times where you can create purely for your own enjoyment: meaning no clients, no professors, no supervisors, and no deadlines are few and far between. If you are in this position, we encourage you to look at it as an opportunity.