

ArtEZ launches new model to develop entrepreneurial skills in the arts

Imagine a student in the arts who, after graduation, wants to work as a freelancer. What skills does that student need to thrive in today's professional world and remain successful in the future? To help answer that question, the ArtEZ Business Centre has developed *ArtisticEntreComp*: a new model aimed at both art students and educators. It offers insights into how to solve problems, seize opportunities, and turn ideas into action.

It's more important than ever for art students to build the right skills to step confidently into their professional careers. Many of them pursue a freelance path after graduation, which means they need to be well prepared. That's why ArtEZ is committed to embedding (creative) entrepreneurship firmly into arts education, and *ArtisticEntreComp* is a great example of that mission.

"Ideally, it will become a standard reflection tool for teachers, students, and academic advisors, and be integrated into arts curricula not just at ArtEZ, but at other art schools as well"

A Warmer, More Accessible Approach

ArtisticEntreComp is a fresh, accessible adaptation of the European *EntreComp* framework, which is widely used around the world to foster entrepreneurial skills. But let's be honest: terms like 'needs analysis' or 'tertiary sector' can feel cold and remote for art students. Jessica de Jaeger, who works at the ArtEZ Business Centre (ABC), noticed this while leading her workshop *Take a Hold on Your Future*, which used the original model to prepare students for the professional world. "I already tried to avoid using overly commercial terms, because students didn't really connect with them," she explains.

To make the framework more approachable, the team decided to adapt the language to better suit the context of arts education, hence the name *ArtisticEntreComp*.

Connecting with the Artist's Perspective

For this adaptation, ABC brought in Creative Writing alumna Lisa Huissoon. "When I first looked at the original model, I felt an immediate distance," she says. "The text was quite dry and didn't really relate to the world of the arts."

Petra van Brecht, a DBKV student and project coordinator, adds: "Together with Lisa, Jessica, and Tamara Rookus (acting head of ABC), we spent a lot of time discussing the choice of words. The challenge was to avoid business jargon without losing the meaning. Lisa couldn't take too much creative license, the essence had to stay intact. And I think we succeeded. The version we now have really speaks to artists and their mindset."

“I realized I already possess some of these entrepreneurial skills”

Jessica notes that both students and teachers can work with the model. “I now run the *Take a Hold on on Your Future* workshop for teachers instead of students, and I’m curious to see how they’ll respond to the new terminology. They can begin using ArtisticEntreComp directly in their lessons.” According to her, the model is highly reflective.

“It’s not about the hard, commercial side of entrepreneurship, it’s about core competencies that help you take initiative and act creatively. It makes the leap into freelance work feel much more manageable.” Lisa adds: “While translating the model, I actually realized I already have some of these entrepreneurial skills, which surprised me! The rest feels more within reach now, too.”

A Tool for Reflection

Petra believes the result is a clear and powerful model. “It’s not some long list of rules saying, ‘you must do this to be a successful entrepreneur.’ It’s more of a conversation starter - a tool that gets you thinking: what do you need to consider when launching your own practice? It’s also useful for self-assessment: how are your entrepreneurial skills coming along?”

What’s next for ArtisticEntreComp? Jessica shares her hopes: “Ideally, it will become a go-to reflection tool for teachers, students, and academic advisors, and that it will be adopted more widely across art schools. And you don’t have to use the whole model. You can also focus on just one area at a time and explore it in depth.”

ArtEZ is the first arts university in the Netherlands to translate and adapt this model specifically for arts education. The official launch took place on November 13, 2024, during the national kick-off of the COP Arts Education in Utrecht.