

Ceramics Established Practice | FAQs

Here we have compiled answers to some frequently asked questions relating to Established Practice. Hopefully you will be able to find the answer to your question here, however if not please don't hesitate to contact us on admin@ssw.org.uk or 01464 861372.

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Booking

How do I join Established Practice?

Established Practice offers regular, independent access to SSW's Ceramics Workshop. As this involves working without the support of a technician we need you to evidence that you have the required skills to work safely and professionally. To do this, when there is a space available for Established Practice, we open it on an application basis. We will ask you to share examples of your work and tell us how Established Practice would support the development of your practice, and share examples of existing work.

How do I book my sessions?

We will automatically update the booking calendar once per month with the following month's sessions. You will be free to select the sessions that suit your schedule. We will not remind you to book your sessions – you are responsible for booking the ones that suit you within each month block.

How often should I book my sessions?

The booking calendar will be updated once per month for the following month. You can visit the booking calendar at a time that suits you. We would recommend you do this once a month as this will help you use your allocated sessions within the allotted time period.

You have 14 hours allocated to you per month. These must be used within the month and cannot be carried forward.

Will there always be sessions available to book?

We have designed this programme with flexibility so there should always be multiple sessions available for every subscriber to book, regardless of when you visit the booking calendar to book your sessions.

I am only available for one of the session times, will I always be able to come then?

We expect this should be fine, as it is unlikely 70% of subscribers will want to book the exact same session date and time every week. On occasion your available date maybe booked by other subscribers, however if this becomes a regular problem (at least 2 months in a row), we will meet with you to see if we can find a way around it.

We are also offering plenty of spaces and dates throughout the month, so we hope there will always be a suitable alternative session available.

Why do I need to book sessions, why can't I come at other times if I can work independently?

We need Established Practice subscribers to book sessions so we can manage capacities in the workshop. We anticipate that Established Practice subscribers will need more space than other users, and with COVID-19 in particular, we want to limit the number of users at any one time for your safety and comfort. If you book a session you do not need to stay for the full duration and can make this up across multiple sessions throughout the month.

Subscription

Why have you decided to change to a subscription model for ceramics?

We truly value each and every regular user of our ceramics workshop – you are wonderful, creative and skilled. With this, we have reflected on how our programmes were running prior to lockdown and felt there were several ways in which we could better support you.

Some of the problems we identified:

- We did not like the competitive aspect of booking sessions, with an unfair race to access limited sessions, and wanted to change this.
- Our sessions were over-subscribed and we were letting down lots of people who either wanted to access the workshop or spend more time in it.
- We wanted to create a more advanced programme for independent practice, for users who need and want more time for their development in ceramics.
- Everyone has diverse needs and ambitions, some of which we cannot support in the workshop. However, we can support people to keep learning at home or in personal studios – we now have a Clay Shop, 1:1 sessions and Firing Service to support this.
- The invoicing process for ceramics was arduous and not working for us or our users. A subscription reduces our financial administration so we can better focus on getting this right and up to speed.
- COVID-19 has further limited how we can work in ceramics, and how many people can use the space at one time.

This programme is a pilot for now, and we will be testing and reflecting to see if it solves these problems – we hope so – and hope you will enjoy it too.

I don't want to subscribe are there other options for me to access ceramics?

Yes, you can get support in learning new skills and developing projects from our Ceramics Technician through 1:1 sessions. You can buy clay and materials through our Clay Shop and fire work using our Firing Service.

I want more/less sessions than what's offered in the subscription, is this possible?

The subscription tiers have been formed to reflect the staff and workshop capacities, together with a commitment to our existing users. There are lots of variables, and we hope we have settled on a balanced offer that will suit as many users as possible. With this, we can't offer any variance in subscription offer at this time, but aren't ruling it out in the future either.

I need to take a break from my subscription, can I do this?

We understand that you may have personal circumstances which mean you may need to take a break from your practice. With this we can offer one month's subscription break, per user, per year. Should you need to take a longer break, we regret that we will need to open your space to another user.

I can't come for a session(s) can someone else use my session instead?

No, the sessions are non-transferrable.

COVID-19

Is it safe to work in the ceramics workshop at SSW?

Beth has been working hard to re-jig the workshop and how we use it to make it COVID secure. Since September, we have been working with rigorous safety measures in place across the site and have had feedback that people feel very safe. You can [download a COVID-19 Information Pack on our website](#) which details these measures.

What if I'm unable to come to SSW due to COVID-19?

If you or someone in your household falls ill from COVID-19, or is suspected to have COVID-19, or new travel restrictions come into force, you will not be able to come to SSW.

In this instance you must contact us to let us know. We will refund you proportionally based on how many sessions you have missed and will agree this in writing on a case-by-case basis.

I'm shielding, is it safe for me to attend?

Please review our safety guidelines ([download here](#)) and make a decision for yourself based on your personal circumstances. Although we have significant safety measures in place, we cannot guarantee that there will not be instances of COVID-19 at SSW.

Payment

I would prefer to pay by cheque, is this possible?

We ask all users to set up a standing order for their subscription as it is a regular payment every month. We regret we cannot accept cheques for subscription fees.

Can I cancel my subscription?

You must give us one month's notice of your intention to cancel your subscription. The last day of your subscription must coincide with the last day of the calendar month.

How do I pay for materials and firings?

You will complete a materials form, listing any materials used throughout the sessions. We will add any firing charges to this for work made in the sessions and invoice you for these costs. These will be payable within payment terms of 30 days.

Why does my work need to be made from start to finish at SSW to receive the subscriber's firing rates?

We have limited kiln capacity and need to make sure we can keep up to speed with all work needing fired. If we offered to fire all work made by subscribers at home, we wouldn't be able to keep up with demand.

Accessibility

I have access support needs – will SSW support me?

Absolutely. You are welcome to share an Access Support Plan with us if you have one already, or alternatively, we can make one with you so we know what you need and can make sure this is communicated throughout the team where appropriate. We will then seek to review this with you regularly. Please tell us on your joining form if you would like to do this.

I don't have access to the internet, is there another way to join Established Practice / book sessions?

If you need to book over the phone or in person, we will support you to do this.