



BECTU

ART TECHNICIAN PAY RATES SURVEY

Analysis Report

Source: BECTU Survey Responses collected by BECTU Art Technician branch,

November 2025 – February 2026

Prepared: June 2026

Total responses: 53

Summary

This report presents the findings of the BECTU Art Technician Permanent Pay Rates Survey, analysing pay, employment conditions, benefits, working hours, and workforce demographics across the UK arts and cultural sector. The survey gathered 53 responses with respondents representing a broad range of institutions, roles, and regions, providing a valuable snapshot of current pay norms and conditions.

The survey reveals a sector characterised by significant pay variation, pay rates far behind freelance pay rates, limited ethnic diversity, and a predominantly young workforce concentrated in the 20–34 and 35–49 age brackets. It is only a small sample of the industry and not as widespread or completed by as many as we would have hoped, and so we believe it shows a skewed version of the industry in terms of gender and age, as there are a lot of older men who dominate the industry, which we have seen from industry data we have gathered from our past surveys and lived experiences.

While pension contributions are widespread, many workers — particularly those in part-time, studio, and education roles — face below-average pay and fewer benefits.

Key Findings

Full-time median annual salary	£34,000 (£16 an hour for a 40 hour week)
Part-time median annual salary	£22,875
Gender pay gap (FT, mean)	£1,500 in favour of male respondents
Highest-paying institutions type (FT)	Logistics Co. £40,500
Lowest-paying institutions type (FT)	Artist Studio £23,325
Highest paid role (FT)	Managers / Co-ordinators/Specialist Art Technician £45,000
Lowest paid role (FT)	Art Technician £20,722

- Managers and Coordinators earn the most among FT groups (£37,000 median).
- Technicians/Art Handlers are the lowest among FT groups (£30,000 median).
- London and Scotland offer the highest full-time pay (means of £37,012 and £36,740); The South West & South Coast has the lowest (£26,907).

- Logistics Companies pay the most by institution type (£40,500 mean FT); Artist Studios pay the least (£23,325)
- Pay increases with age: 35–49 year olds earn £2,500 more on average than 20–34 year olds.
- The workforce is 95%+ White, highlighting a significant diversity challenge for the sector.
- Only 20% of respondents are BECTU members, despite the union sponsoring the survey.

1. Methodology & data notes

The survey was distributed by the BECTU Art Technician Branch and collected responses between late 2025 and early 2026. Responses were submitted via Google Forms and covered job title, employer, location, employment type, pay rate, type of work undertaken, holiday entitlement, benefits received, working hours, and demographic information.

2. Pay by job role

Job titles in the survey were free-text. For analysis, these have been grouped into seven categories based on seniority and function. The table below presents full-time and part-time findings separately.

2.1 Full-time pay by job role

The following table covers the 38 full-time respondents, ranked from lowest to highest median (exact middle value when all added together) annual salary.

Job Role	Median	Lowest	Highest	n
Collections / Studio Assistant	£29,448	£28,002	£30,894	2
Art Technician / Art Handler	£30,000	£20,722	£45,000	15
Senior Technician	£34,207	£31,000	£42,000	4
Specialist Technician	£38,500	£23,500	£41,000	4
Coordinator	£38,250	£32,000	£40,000	3
Manager / Head Technician	£37,000	£31,400	£45,000	10

There is a clear pay hierarchy, with Managers and Coordinators at the top and general Technicians at the lower end. However, the Art Technician/Art Handler category shows the widest salary range (£20,722–£45,000), reflecting the diversity of institutions, regions, and seniority levels captured within this broad grouping.

Specialist Technicians command a higher median (£38,500) than Coordinators (£38,250) and are close to Managers (£37,000) in median terms, suggesting that specialist skills are well-remunerated relative to management grades — though the sample size is small (n=4).

2.2 Part-time pay by job role

Part-time data covers 15 respondents. The vast majority (13) are in the Technician/Art Handler category.

Job Role	Median	Lowest	Highest	n
Junior Technician	£14,000	£14,000	£14,000	1
Senior Technician	£16,830	£16,830	£16,830	1
Art Technician / Art Handler	£23,134	£9,600	£36,000	13

The Junior and Senior Technician part-time figures each represent a single respondent and should be treated with caution. The Art Technician/Art Handler range (£9,600–£36,000) is very wide, reflecting part-time workers ranging from a few hours per week to near full-time.

3. Pay by UK region

Survey responses were mapped to seven UK regions. A significant proportion (20 responses) lacked location data and were excluded from the regional analysis.

3.1 Full-time pay by region

Region	Median	Lowest	Highest	n
South West & South Coast	£27,000	£20,722	£33,000	3
Yorkshire & Humber	£28,940	£26,479	£31,400	2
Midlands	£30,000	£23,500	£36,000	5
North West	£31,189	£30,378	£32,000	2
South East	£33,002	£28,002	£35,475	5
Scotland	£38,500	£29,961	£40,000	4
London	£38,000	£29,206	£45,000	17

London is the highest-paying region (median £38,000), which aligns with national pay norms and the concentration of major galleries, museums, and logistics companies in the capital. Scotland performs remarkably similarly to London (median £38,500), likely reflecting the institution mix — including commercial galleries and specialist technician roles in Edinburgh and Glasgow.

The South West and South Coast is notably the lowest-paying region (median £27,000), more than £10,000 below London and Scotland. Yorkshire & Humber also sits below the national picture, though both regions have very small sample sizes (n=3 and n=2 respectively) which limits the robustness of these figures.

Regional data should be interpreted with caution: only London has a sample large enough (n=17) to draw firm conclusions. All other regions have between 2 and 9 respondents.

3.2 Part-time pay by region

Only four regions had part-time respondents with pay data.

Region	Median	Lowest	Highest	n
South West & South Coast	£16,830	£16,830	£16,830	1
South East	£20,073	£20,073	£20,073	1
London	£20,567	£9,600	£36,000	8
Scotland	£27,000	£14,000	£35,000	5

4. Pay by type of work undertaken

The survey asked respondents to select all types of work they perform from a predefined list. As respondents typically selected multiple options, the n values in the table below overlap significantly and also combine full-time and part-time rates. These figures should be read as: "the average pay of people who perform this type of work" rather than pay rates for specific work types.

Work Type	Mean	Median	Lowest	Highest	n
Specialist AV technician	£16,830	£16,830	£16,830 (PT)	£16,830 (PT)	1
Printing	£24,990	£24,990	£23,500 (FT)	£26,479 (FT)	2
Archiving	£27,699	£30,189	£9,600 (PT)	£40,000 (FT)	8
Art technical assistance in education	£29,048	£27,000	£14,000 (PT)	£41,000 (FT)	15
Education	£29,483	£28,689	£14,000 (PT)	£41,000 (FT)	16
Installing art and objects	£30,680	£31,200	£9,600 (PT)	£45,000 (FT)	38
Packing art and objects	£30,777	£32,000	£9,600 (PT)	£45,000 (FT)	31
Fabrication / Art fabrication	£31,755	£34,000	£9,600 (PT)	£45,000 (FT)	25
Handling art and objects	£31,791	£33,000	£9,600 (PT)	£45,000	36
Logistics	£31,797	£33,500	£9,600 (PT)	£45,000	24

Work Type	Mean	Median	Lowest	Highest	n
Condition reporting	£31,885	£33,001	£9,600	£45,000	22
Carpentry	£31,886	£33,000	£9,600	£45,000	23
Site Management	£32,065	£30,189	£20,073	£45,000	16
Framing art	£32,384	£33,000	£20,722	£40,000	13
Project Management	£32,772	£33,000	£14,500	£45,000	27
Managing staff	£34,252	£35,056	£26,910	£45,000	20

Work types associated with management and strategic oversight (Managing Staff, Project Management, Site Management) cluster at the higher end of the pay scale. Education and archiving-related activities sit at the lower end, consistent with the generally lower pay rates found in education institutions and part-time roles.

5. Pay by institution type

Respondents identified the type of institution they work for. The following table ranks institution types by mean pay, from lowest to highest.

Institution Type	Mean	Median	Lowest	Highest	n
Artist Studio	£23,325	£22,875	£14,000 (PT)	£38,250 (FT)	5
Other (inc. Further Education)	£28,680	£30,000	£20,722 (FT)	£34,000 (FT)	4
Framer	£30,000	£30,000	£30,000 (FT)	£30,000 (FT)	1
Public Gallery	£31,272	£32,500	£16,830 (PT)	£38,850 (FT)	12
Museum	£31,472	£32,000	£17,350 (PT)	£40,000 (FT)	10
Commercial Gallery	£31,544	£34,000	£9,600 (PT)	£45,000 (FT)	7
Arts Charity	£31,862	£31,400	£26,910 (FT)	£38,000 (FT)	5
Education	£31,865	£35,000	£20,073 (PT)	£41,000 (FT)	7
Auction House	£31,000	£31,000	£22,000 (FT)	£40,000 (FT)	2
Logistics Company	£40,500	£40,500	£39,000 (FT)	£42,000 (FT)	2

Logistics Companies pay significantly more than any other institution type (mean £40,500), reflecting the specialist skills required — including HGV licensing, specialist handling, and the commercial nature of these organisations. Artist Studios are by far the lowest-paying (mean £23,325), with considerable variance suggesting some studios pay very little for what may be hybrid studio management/art-handling roles.

Public Galleries, Museums, Commercial Galleries, Arts Charities, and Education institutions cluster closely together (means of £31,272–£31,865). Despite their similar means,

Commercial Galleries show the widest variance (£9,600–£45,000), suggesting highly inconsistent pay norms within the commercial sector.

Public Galleries and Museums, often seen as the core of the sector, pay broadly in line with the survey average, though neither reaches the pay levels of the logistics and commercial sectors.

6. Holiday entitlement and benefits

6.1 Holiday entitlement

The statutory minimum of 28 days (for full-time staff working five days per week) was the most common entitlement reported, cited by 24 of 39 full-time respondents. A further 14 full-time workers reported "other" arrangements, with many noting enhanced entitlements of 25–30 days, term-time contracts, or informal agreements.

Holiday Entitlement	Full-time	Part-time	Total
28 days (FT statutory minimum)	24	3	27
22.4 days (4 days/week, pro-rata)	1	1	2
16.8 days (3 days/week, pro-rata)	0	4	4
11.2 days (2 days/week, pro-rata)	0	2	2
5.6 days (1 day/week, pro-rata)	0	1	1
Other / non-standard arrangement	14	5	19

For part-time workers, holiday entitlement is fragmented, with many receiving pro-rata statutory minimums and several in non-standard arrangements. Only 3 part-time respondents receive the full 28-day entitlement, suggesting some may be contracted on notional full-week terms.

By job role, Managers and Head Technicians overwhelmingly receive the statutory 28 days (9 of 10), while Technicians/Art Handlers show the most variation, with 16 in "other" arrangements — likely reflecting the diversity of contract types within this broad group.

6.2 Benefits

Pension contributions are the most widely received benefit, reported by 65% of all respondents. Training licences (forklift, scissor lift, scaffold etc.) are the second most common at 42%, followed by discounted merchandise or services (33%) and professional training (23%). Private health care and money bonuses are rare across the sector.

Benefit	All Respondents %	Full-time %	Part-time %
Pension contributions	65%	72%	62%
Training Licences (forklift etc.)	42%	49%	38%
Discounted Merchandise / Services	33%	36%	31%
Professional Training	23%	31%	12%
Reciprocal Exhibition Tickets	8%	8%	0%
Money Bonuses	7%	8%	6%
Private Health Care	3%	5%	0%

Full-time workers are significantly better benefited across every category. This is particularly pronounced for professional training (31% FT vs 12% PT) and private health care (5% FT, 0% PT).

6.3 Benefits by job role

Pension receipt is highest among Specialist Technicians (100%) and Technicians/Art Handlers (69%). Senior Technicians/Coordinators have a 100% training licence rate, reflecting the practical nature of senior technical roles and stand out for their combination of high pension receipt (67%), private health care (67%), and money bonuses (33%).

7. Working hours and pay

The survey asked about standard hours in a working day. Responses varied, with the most common being 8 hours (40-hour week) and 7.2 hours (36-hour week). A significant number (15 respondents) selected "Other" or provided non-standard hours.

7.1 Hours and hourly rate

A key finding from the hours analysis is that working longer hours does not reliably translate to higher hourly pay. Respondents on 36-hour week contracts consistently achieve better hourly rates than those on 45-hour week contracts, even when the latter earn higher absolute salaries.

Hours per week	Typical hourly range	Notes
36 hours/week	£16.03–£21.37	Best hourly rates; common in galleries/museums
40 hours/week	£11.30–£21.63	Most common; widest range
45 hours/week	£14.53–£19.23	Higher salary but lower hourly than 36hr workers

The lowest hourly rate recorded was £4.62 for a part-time Technician/Art Handler (annual salary £9,600 on a 40-hour day rate), suggesting very limited hours were actually worked. This is well below the National Living Wage (£12.21/hr from April 2024) on an annualised basis, though the low annual total likely reflects very few hours per week rather than a below-NLW hourly rate. It also shows that the fulltime/part time art technical roles are paid far below freelance rates even though they receive benefits, it is quite behind.

7.2 Full-time hours distribution

Of the 27 full-time respondents who provided hours data, 15 work a 40-hour week, 9 work a 36-hour week, and 3 work a 45-hour week. The prevalence of 36-hour week contracts among gallery and museum workers reflects sector norms, while the 45-hour week appears mainly in logistics and commercial settings.

8. Gender analysis

The survey achieved a near-equal gender split: 29 female respondents (48%), 30 male (50%), and 1 non-binary respondent (2%). This makes the dataset unusually well-balanced for gender analysis, though the small overall sample limits statistical significance. However this does not reflect the actual industry and we would guess looking at the age data that the survey was more accessible to younger, and more proficiency online. SO we believe the results are not a true reflection of the industry.

8.1 Gender pay gap

Among full-time respondents, male workers earn on average £1,500 (4.5%) more than female workers. This is below the UK national average gender pay gap but is notable given the relatively equal gender representation in the sector.

Gender	FT Mean	FT Median	PT Mean	PT Median
Female	£33,230	£33,002	£25,476	£24,892
Male	£34,730	£34,700	£22,177	£20,242
Non-binary	—	—	£14,000	£14,000

Interestingly, the part-time gender pay gap reverses: female part-time respondents earn more on average (£25,476) than male part-time respondents (£22,177). This may reflect that female part-time workers in this sample tend to work more hours or in more senior roles, while some male part-time respondents are in very low-hours positions.

Hourly rate analysis (full-time only) confirms the gap: female respondents average £16.83/hr versus £17.35/hr for male respondents.

8.2 Job role distribution by gender

While Art Technician/Art Handler roles are near-equally split (49% female, 51% male), clear differences emerge at the extremes of the job hierarchy.

Job Role	Female	Male	Non-binary	Female %
Collections / Studio Assistant	2	0	0	100%
Specialist Technician	3	1	0	75%
Coordinator	1	2	0	33%
Senior Technician	2	3	0	40%
Manager / Head Technician	4	6	0	40%
Art Technician / Art Handler	17	18	0	49%
Junior Technician	0	0	1	—

Manager and Head Technician roles skew male (60% male vs 40% female), while Specialist Technician roles skew strongly female (75%). Collections and Studio Assistant roles in this sample are exclusively female, and Coordinators are majority male (67%). These patterns may reflect wider structural inequalities in arts sector career pathways.

8.3 Benefits by gender

Female respondents are more likely to receive pension contributions (72% vs 60%) and professional training (34% vs 13%). Male respondents are more likely to receive training licences for specialist equipment (53% vs 31%) and money bonuses (10% vs 3%). These differences may partly reflect the types of roles each gender occupies: male respondents in more logistical, equipment-intensive roles receive more practical training benefits, while female respondents in gallery and collection roles receive more structured professional development.

8.4 Holiday entitlement by gender

Male respondents are more likely to receive the full 28-day statutory entitlement (57% of male vs 34% of female respondents). Female respondents are disproportionately in "other" arrangements (52% of female vs 30% of male). This disparity likely reflects the higher rate of part-time and non-standard working among female respondents in the survey.

9. Age analysis

The workforce captured by this survey is concentrated in the younger age brackets. 50% of respondents are aged 20–34, 47% aged 35–49, and only 3% aged 50–64. This profile does not reflect the demographic composition of the sector, but we believe this to be due to the digital / social media distribution of the survey.

9.1 Pay by age

Age Group	Mean Pay	Median Pay	Lowest	Highest	n
20–34	£29,544	£30,189	£9,600	£41,000	28
35–49	£32,038	£33,000	£14,500	£45,000	23
50–64	£35,706	£35,706	£35,412	£36,000	2

There is a clear pay progression with age: 35–49 year olds earn approximately £2,500 more on average than 20–34 year olds. The 50–64 figure (£35,706) suggests continued progression, though the sample of just two respondents makes this unreliable as a data point.

The age-pay relationship is consistent with career progression norms, where more experienced workers accumulate seniority and earn more. However, the survey does not capture length of service, so it is not possible to determine whether this reflects genuine experience-based progression or simply age-related structural factors.

9.2 Job role by age

Management roles are split almost equally between 20–34 and 35–49 year olds (5 each), suggesting that career progression to senior roles is achievable relatively early in the sector. Coordinator roles skew younger (2 of 3 are aged 20–34). Technician/Art Handler roles are split evenly across age groups, reflecting the entry-level to mid-career nature of this broad category.

9.3 Gender and age

The 20–34 age group skews female (16 female vs 13 male), while the 35–49 group skews male (16 male vs 12 female). This pattern could suggest that women are entering the sector in greater numbers at younger ages, or alternatively, that women are more likely to move into part-time working, leave the sector, or reduce their working hours as they age — a pattern seen in many other industries. This warrants monitoring in future surveys.

10. Ethnicity analysis

The survey reveals an overwhelmingly White workforce. Of the 58 respondents who provided ethnicity data:

Ethnicity	Count	% of respondents (with data)
White British	38	65%
Another White background	14	24%
White Irish	3	5%
Black British	1	2%
Another Asian background	1	2%
Another Mixed background	1	2%
Prefer not to say	2	3%

Over 95% of respondents who answered this question identified as White (across three categories: White British, Another White background, and White Irish). Black, Asian, and Mixed respondents together account for just 3 individuals in the dataset.

10.1 Pay and Ethnicity

While pay figures by ethnicity can be calculated, they are not meaningful given the tiny sample sizes outside of the White categories. The figures below are provided for reference only:

Ethnicity	Mean Pay	n	Note
White British	£29,895	37	Largest group; includes many PT/junior roles
Another White background	£33,043	9	
White Irish	£34,667	3	Small sample
Other groups	£27,333	3	Small sample

IMPORTANT: The apparent lower mean pay for White British respondents relative to other White groups does not indicate a meaningful pay differential. It more likely reflects the fact that White British respondents represent the full range of roles and seniority levels, including many part-time and junior workers, while the smaller groups are small so should be read with caution but are concerning of lower pay.

10.2 Diversity implications

The near-total absence of non-White respondents is the most significant finding in this section. The arts and cultural sector has long faced criticism for its lack of ethnic diversity,

and this survey — while not necessarily representative of the whole sector — provides further evidence of that challenge in technical and handling roles specifically.

Future surveys should consider oversampling from under-represented communities and partnering with organisations focused on diversity in the arts to reach a broader range of respondents.

11. Conclusions and recommendations

The BECTU Art Technician Pay Rates Survey provides a valuable, if small-scale, snapshot of pay and working conditions across the UK arts technical workforce. The key findings point to a sector with significant pay variation, clear disparities between employment types and institution categories, a gender pay gap, and an urgent diversity challenge.

11.1 Summary of Key Conclusions

- Pay varies significantly by role, region, institution type, and employment status. The range from £9,600 to £45,000 within the Technician/Art Handler category alone illustrates the inconsistency of pay norms across the sector.
- London and Scotland offer the best full-time pay; the South West & South Coast and Yorkshire & Humber lag behind. This regional disparity warrants attention, particularly as many institutions outside London operate on smaller budgets.
- Logistics Companies pay notably more than cultural institutions, raising questions about whether the arts sector is losing technical talent to commercial competitors offering better remuneration.
- The gender pay gap (4.5% at mean level in full-time roles) is below the national average. Management roles remain disproportionately male, while specialist and collections roles skew female.
- Part-time workers are significantly disadvantaged in pay and benefits, particularly in professional training and private health care. This is compounded by non-standard holiday arrangements that may fall below pro-rata statutory entitlements in some cases.
- The workforce is almost entirely White, representing a major diversity failing. This should be a priority for sector-wide action.
- Only 20% of survey respondents are BECTU members — a significant recruitment opportunity.

11.2 Recommendations

- **Pay benchmarking:** Establish a sector pay benchmark: BECTU should work with major employers to establish and publish pay benchmarks by role and region, providing a clearer framework against which institutions can assess their pay practices.
- **Gender equity:** Address the gender pay gap: Employers should conduct internal pay audits. The disproportionate male representation in management roles and female representation in lower-paid collections/studio roles warrants active intervention in recruitment and promotion practices.
- **Part-time parity:** Improve part-time conditions: The significant gap in benefits and professional development opportunities between full-time and part-time workers should be addressed. Pro-rata parity should be the minimum standard.
- **Diversity:** Prioritise ethnic diversity: The near-total absence of non-White respondents requires urgent sector-wide action. Future surveys should actively seek to include under-represented communities, and institutions should review their recruitment practices.
- **Working hours:** Investigate the hours-pay relationship: The finding that workers on longer hours (45hr/wk) do not earn proportionally more should be highlighted to employers as a fairness issue. Hourly rate transparency should be part of any pay benchmarking initiative.

11.3 Limitations and future research

This survey has several important limitations. The sample of 53 with pay data is small relative to the total population of art technicians in the UK. The digital distribution method may have introduced selection bias towards more digitally active workers. Regional samples outside London are too small to support robust conclusions.

Future surveys should aim for a larger, more representative sample, include employer-side data collection, and implement a structured outreach strategy to reach workers from under-represented communities, smaller institutions, and geographic areas outside London.

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