



# CALL FOR ARTISTS

## Commission specifications for Orange Shirt Day t-shirt artwork at the University of Saskatchewan

### About this guide

This guide explains how artwork is prepared for printing on t-shirts to support the University of Saskatchewan (USask) community as it acknowledges Orange Shirt Day and the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation on Sept. 30 each year.

The artwork selected for this commission will be printed many times and worn publicly as part of Orange Shirt Day. Because of this, there are practical and technical considerations that come into play once a commission is awarded. This guide is shared early so artists understand those considerations in advance, before final artwork is developed by the selected artist.

This guide supports artists who may choose to create the artwork as either a **physical painting** or **digital artwork**, and focuses on:

- how original artwork moves from an artist's hands into a finished t-shirt; and
- print and production factors that can

affect how artwork appears when reproduced.

This commission is intended for Indigenous artists (First Nations, Métis, or Inuit). Indigenous membership or citizenship verification is required for the shortlisted artist(s) and takes place later in the process.

**Questions about verification, compensation, timelines, and other Call for Artists details are available on the official website located at <https://shop.usask.ca/call-for-artists>.**

### What to expect if selected

This guide explains the considerations affecting how artwork will be printed on a t-shirt after a commission is awarded. The goal is to protect your authorship, reduce last-minute changes, and make printing on t-shirts as faithful to your artwork as possible.

- **If you plan to work digitally**, the final artwork will need to print clearly on fabric within a **finished print area of about 12" wide × 14" high, and be supplied as an**

*The shirt artwork shown above was created by James Desjarlais (left shirt), Chris Chipak (centre shirt), and Vanessa Hyggen (right shirt).*

**.AI or .EPS file.** A little planning at the creation stage helps avoid larger changes later.

- **If you plan to create a physical painting,** the university will photograph or scan the artwork and prepare the production file. You won't be asked to create digital files, and you'll have an opportunity to review and approve the digitized version to ensure it reflects your original work. **For this commission, the requested size for a physical painting is 18" × 24".**

## How artwork can look on a t-shirt

When artwork is printed on a t-shirt, it can sometimes appear a little different than it does on a canvas or screen. The colour of the shirt, the type of ink, and the way edges meet the fabric can all affect how the final design looks.

You don't need to change how you work for this commission. The next section simply shows a few examples so you can see how different kinds of artwork typically appear once printed on an orange shirt.

## Visual examples: How artwork can appear on an orange shirt

The following examples show how different kinds of artwork can appear once printed on an orange t-shirt. They're not rules or requirements. They're simply here to give a sense of what usually prints clearly on fabric, and where certain elements—like detailed backgrounds or colour transitions—can behave differently when placed on a shirt.

These visuals are meant to support your creative choices, not limit them. Many

approaches work well, and every artist's process is different. These examples are just a quick reference to help you see how artwork interacts with fabric, colour, and placement before final production.

## Artwork example with a full scene or background

Artwork that fills the page or includes a full background can be difficult to place on a t-shirt without changing the composition.



*The above example shows a full-scene composition. Without artist-directed placement, fitting it to a t-shirt can change the composition.*



*These mockups show outcomes the university seeks to avoid without the artist's direction: cropping that removes parts of the work, or placing a full rectangular scene so it reads as a canvas on fabric.*

## Artwork prepared with placement resolved



*In the above examples, t-shirt placement is factored by the artist in advance. Backgrounds, shapes, and/or text are defined in the artwork, so the piece can be reproduced on a shirt without cropping or reinterpretation by others.*



*Because placement is resolved within the artwork, the example shirts above would preserve the composition and intent as approved by the artist.*

“Every Child Matters” may be integrated into the artwork by the artist or added later by USask. **The phrase is a trademark of the Orange Shirt Society and will be used under a licence coordinated by the university.**

Final art placement and presentation follow the artist’s direction and are not changed without the artist’s approval. A USask logo will appear on reproduced items, and the artist’s signature and year are encouraged to be included where feasible.

**Submitted designs are assumed to be original work by the artist unless the artist indicates otherwise. The use of clip art or stock vector elements, whether copyright-free or licensed, is not permitted.**

## When digital artwork needs extra preparation

Some digital artwork can be printed on a t-shirt exactly as created. In other cases, the artwork may need to stay editable so colours and key elements can be prepared for printing. This often depends on the tools an artist uses and how the artwork is saved.

If you work digitally, the next pages include a brief reference section with details that may help you decide how to prepare your final file. You don’t necessarily need to learn new software or change your process — this information is here only to support clarity and help avoid last-minute adjustments.

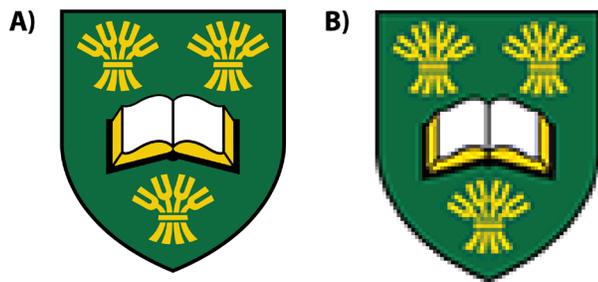
*“We have a responsibility—both individually and collectively—to support the work of reconciliation, redress past wrongs, mend and heal broken relationships, and lay the foundation for our shared future.”*

— [University of Saskatchewan Indigenous Strategy](#),  
[ohpahotân | oohpaahotaan: let’s fly up together](#)

## References for digital art submissions

### Understanding vector and raster images

Digital artwork is commonly created as either vector or raster files. The difference affects how an image scales, how clean the edges appear in print, and how reliably a garment printer can reproduce the work.



*Vector artwork (left) remains sharp at any size, while raster artwork (right) shows pixellation when enlarged.*

**Vector images** are built from lines, curves, and shapes defined by mathematics. They can be resized up or down without losing clarity. Because elements remain editable, colours and shapes can be isolated without changing the artwork itself.

**Raster images** are made of pixels, like photographs. When enlarged beyond their original size, edges can soften or pixelate. Raster files can still be expressive and detailed, but they do not scale in the same way as vector files.

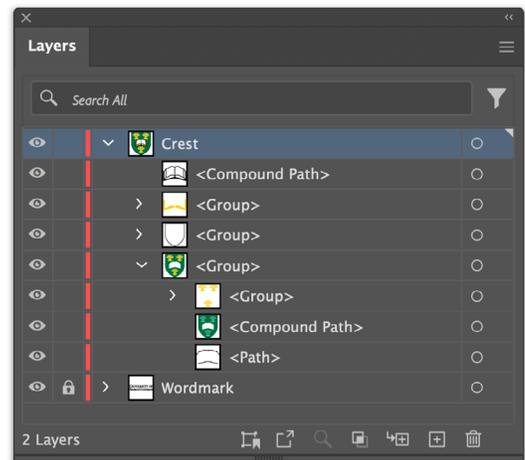
When artwork is digital, third party garment printers often require editable layers, with colours and main elements kept on their own layers, so edges stay crisp and the result remains true to the artist's intent.

### Why layers matter for garment printing

Professional garment printers often need to isolate individual colours when preparing customized products. This is especially important when inks are applied separately or where colours meet, overlap, or interact with the fabric.

Using layered or grouped digital files helps keep different components of an artwork distinct during production. This supports cleaner edges and helps maintain the integrity of the artwork once all elements are prepared for printing.

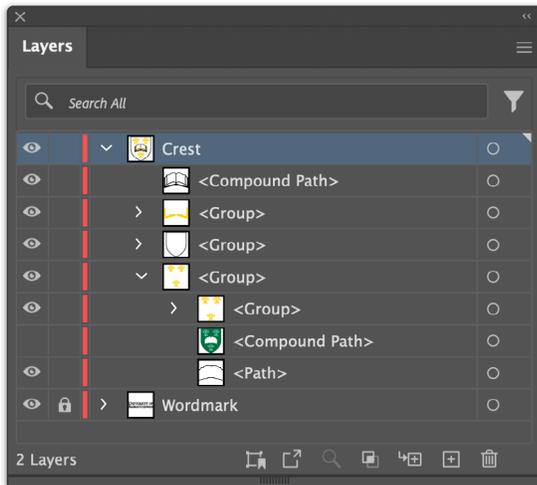
The way layers are created and organized can vary depending on the software an artist uses. Artists who want software-specific guidance may find short overview videos and tutorials on YouTube and other learning sites; this reference focuses on what printers typically need, not how to use a particular program.



*Vector file with colours and elements organized on separate, editable layers.*



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*The same vector file with a single colour isolated by toggling layer visibility (green).*

## Digital file specifications (for digital artwork)

- **Final production file is supplied as a vector file in .AI or .EPS format by the selected artist.**
- Colours and key elements remain on their own editable, unflattened layers or groups.
- Artwork is scalable without loss of clarity or definition.

**NOTE:** Software and workflows vary based on artist preferences.

## How artwork becomes a production file

### How artwork is prepared

- All artwork (whether created digitally or as a painting) becomes a digital production file before printing on a t-shirt.

- For paintings, the digital file is created by the university after it photographs or scans the art. The artist reviews and approves the digital version to ensure it reflects the original work.
- For digital artwork, the production file is based on the artist's submitted file.

## Print area

- **Artwork is produced within a print space of about 12" × 14".** Placement is finalized during production.

## Colour considerations

- Clear edges and distinct areas of colour can help maintain definition on fabric.

## File preparation considerations (digital artists only)

- When artwork is digital, third-party garment printers often require editable layers, with colours and main elements kept on their own layers, so edges stay crisp and the result remains true to the artist's intent.

## Fine details

- Very thin lines, small text, or soft transitions may appear slightly different on fabric. **Lines with a bit more weight and details with clear boundaries tend to reproduce more consistently.**

## Backgrounds

- Solid backgrounds and soft fades can both print well.
- If a background isn't part of your final intent, a clean edge around the artwork can offer flexibility during layout.